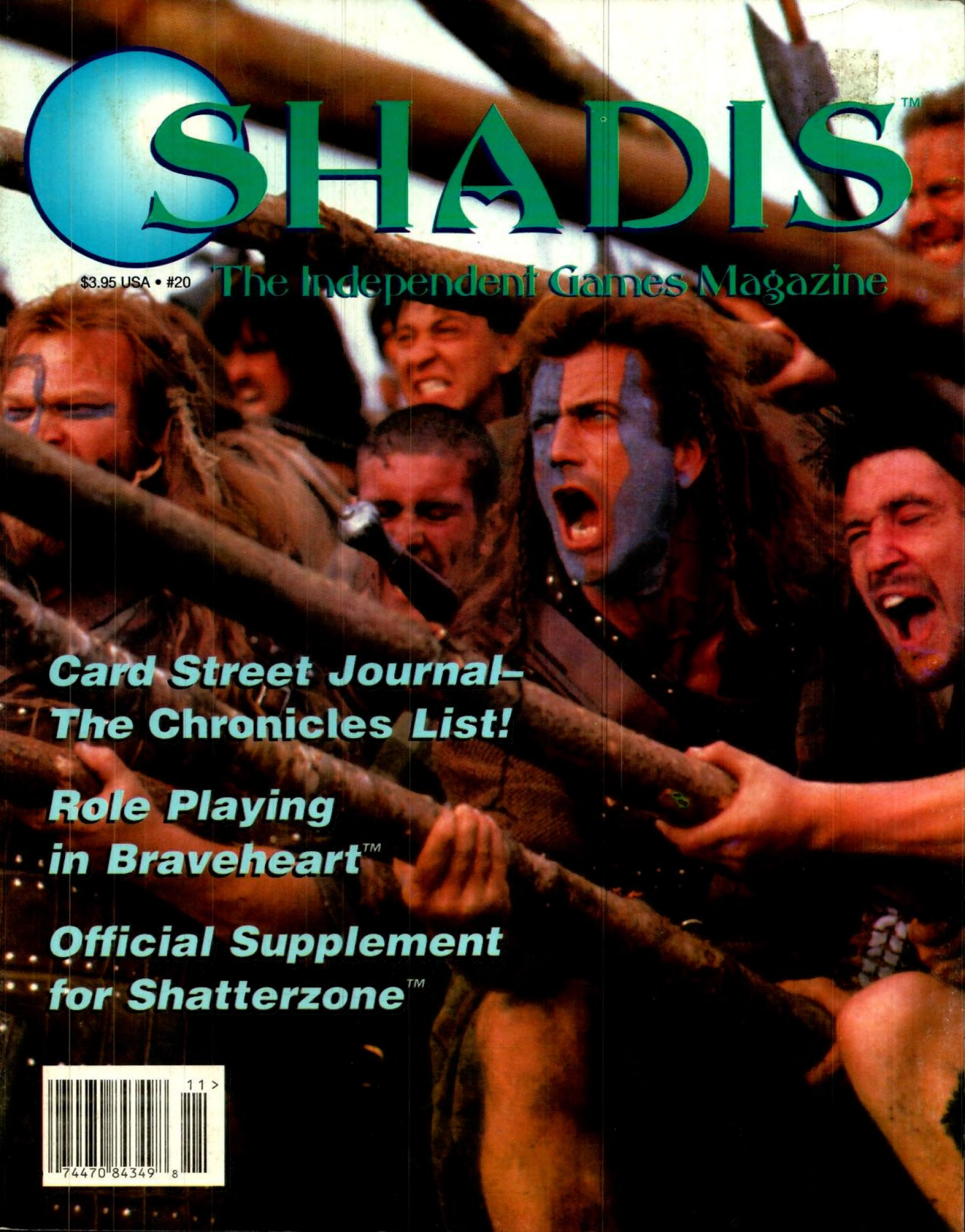
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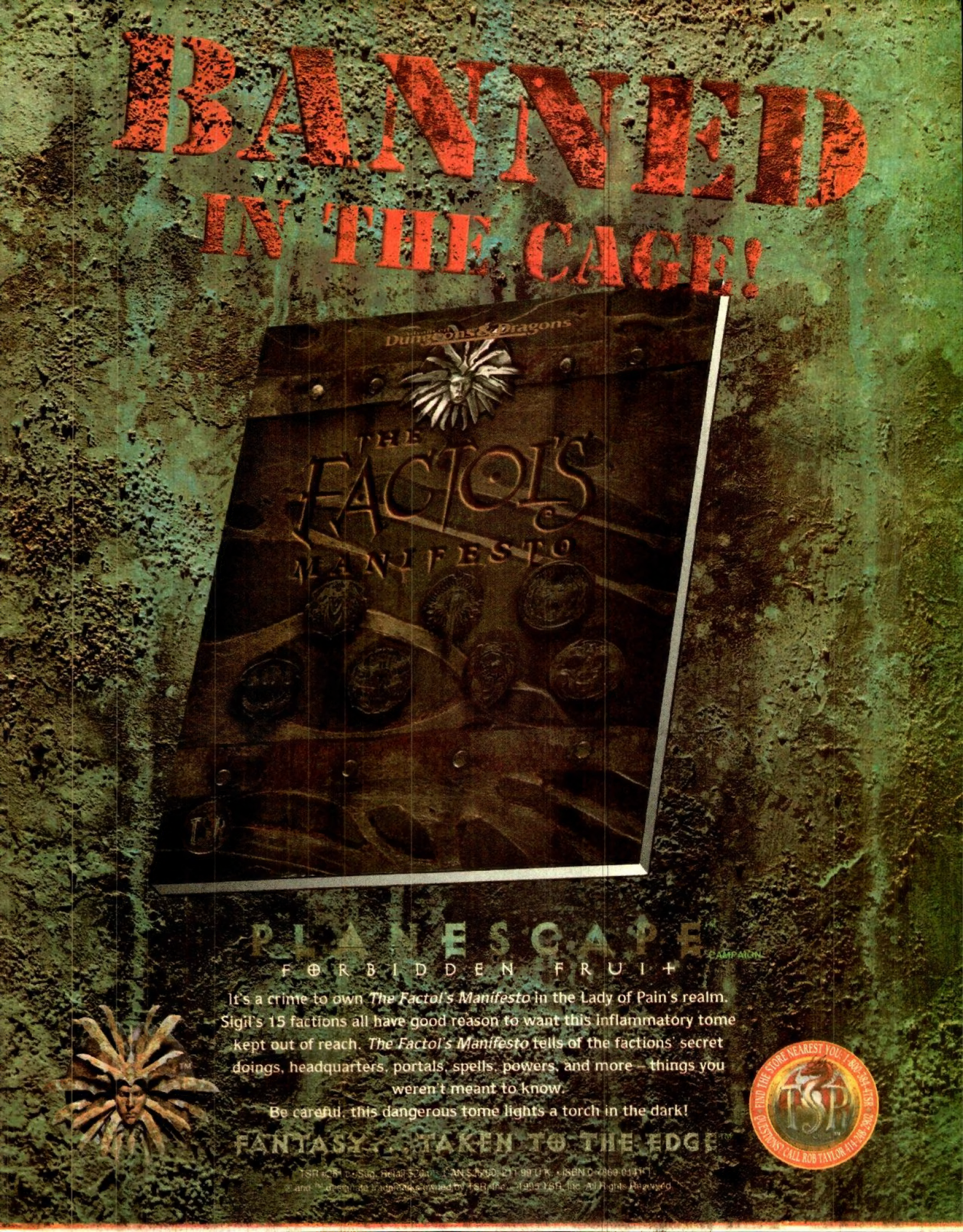
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Contents

Special Features

Chinese Hermetic Magic ..... Kathleen Malone - 10
A new magic system for FASA's Shadowrun.

Angry Men In Kilts ..... Rob Vaux - 21
William Wallace, Braveheart and Mel Gibson's knees. Bring them all into your campaign.

Sources of Runequest III Cults for Glorantha ..... Curtis Taylor - 30
Charting the official cults of I.C.E.'s fantasy line.

Stock Ships: The Missing Vessels ..... Dave Pilurs - 32
An official supplement to West End's Shatterzone.

Technobabble ..... Curtis Craddock - 42
Scotty does it. Now you can too.

Gamemaster's Workshop

Gamesmaster's Workshop is a series of generic articles and GM aids.

The Importance of Family ..... Leonard and Ann Wilson - 47
Clans and blood relations in fantasy settings.

The Best Things in Life...Aren't Things ..... Steve Madill - 51
Reward your PCs with something other than gold.

Cattle Call ..... Larry Granato - 60
NPC archetypes for any campaign.

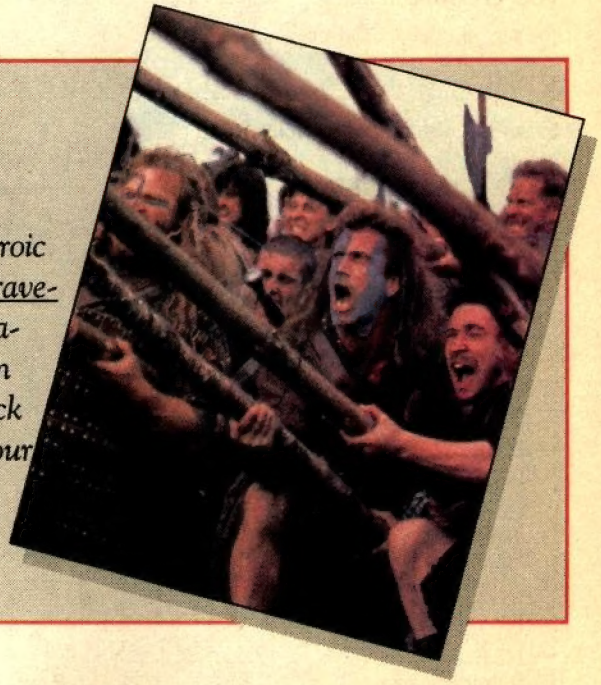
The Price To Pay ..... Todd Cumming - 66
A reflection on the high mortality rate in RPGs.

Extras on Demand ..... Brandon Cope - 69
More NPC templates for GURPS.

Hook, Line & Sinker™ 96
Adventures on the fly!

About the Cover:

William Wallace strikes a heroic pose in Mel Gibson's epic Braveheart, photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures. For more on Wallace and his friends, check out "Angry Men in Kilts," our feature article on page 21.



Regular Departments

Cries from the Attic 4
Editorial of a madman.

Mail Bag 6
Our readers talk back.

Real Spies 8
If James Bond can get a date, why can't Carl Larson?

Zine Scene 74
A closer look at the small press world.

Flag Bridge™ 77
Our special play-by-mail section.

Bits n' Pieces 83
Rumors, new products, etc.

Up My Sleeve 86
The world of card games.

Market Platz 96
Classifieds, announcements, conventions, etc.

New Perspectives 99
The world of miniatures.

Comics

Stick Figure Theatre 107
A new piece of humor from the mind of Chris Avellone.

Finieous Fingers 108
Is it just us, or does he have killer hat-head?

Joe Genero 111
Joe gets mugged by Bambi!

Knights of the Dinner Table™ 112
Can the Knights survive Molly 5000?

Advertisers This Issue

Alderac Entertainment Group 26
Black Dragon Press 97
Black Gate Publishing ..... Inside Back
Bold City Graphics 49
Cactus Games 87
Card Sharks 85
Chaos Lords 20
Companion Games 82
FPG 95
Game Express, The 71
Gold Rush Games 52
D/8 Magazine 78
I.C.E. 5, 31, 110
Infinity Comics 13
Last Unicorn Games ..... Inside Front
Mayfair Games 33
ODS 54
Paul & Judy's Coins and Cards 65
RPG International 16
R. Talsorian 98
Thunder Castle Games 80
TSR 1, 56-57, 68
Wargames West 44
Weapons Emporium 64
Wingnut 41
Wintertree 81
Wizards of the Coast ... 12, 90, Back Cover
Zody Games 53

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The staff of **SHADIS** is determined to keep this publication independent and bringing our readers the best coverage of the gaming industry available.

Although the **Alderac Entertainment Group**, publishers of **SHADIS**, publishes game systems and supplements — **SHADIS** will not become a house-organ.

Our policy (written in stone) is that **SHADIS** will not review products produced by **AEG** and that **AEG** is limited to one full page ad per issue. In addition, articles relating to **AEG** games will be limited to two issues per year — not to exceed a combined total of fifteen pages for both issues. (that works out to 15 pages per 672 published pages of **SHADIS**.)

This policy actually penalizes **AEG** for being associated with **SHADIS** rather than having an unfair advantage over other companies. We hope this policy demonstrates our determination to keep **SHADIS** truly independent.

Amendment: This policy does not apply to **SHADIS PRESENTS**. ❑

Cries From the Attic

Editorial of a Madman

Call of the Con

Ok, that's about the nearest thing I can compare to what I'm about to do. I've been staring at the computer screen for nearly an hour. All I have to do is finish this editorial and I can hit the road for DragonCon to launch my summer convention tour.

Sorry folks, the Call of the Con is strong in this heart and I must heed it. Hopefully, I'll see many of you at the various convention this summer. Stop by our booth and say hello. In the meantime, I'm pushing myself away from this keyboard and making like Casper.

I'm tossing some KODT strips to fill the huge white blank spot - (they make great space fillers). Someone pointed out to me a while back that one of the most popular KODT characters, the local gamestore owner, Weird Pete, had never graced the pages of the magazine. Pete's character debuted in Issue#1 of the comic book followed by appearances in #2 and #3.

So to remedy that oversight, here's an out-take from a storyline in KODT#3 where Pete stands in as guest gamemaster for B.A. Enjoy! See you all at the cons!!

Jolly R. Blackburn

5 July, 1995

THE FACE-OFF (PART ONE OF A TWO PART SAGA!)

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN (STORY BY ROB VAUX & JOHN WICK)

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Mail Bag

Our Readers Talk Back

Due to space considerations, some letters have been edited. Even if your letter isn't printed, your comments are welcome and your suggestions and constructive criticisms are thoughtfully considered. So keep the letters coming. Remember SHADIS is an interactive magazine – we want you, the reader, to be involved.

Jolly R. Blackburn

Dear SHADIS,

Thanks so much for including Visionary Publishing in #19's Bits 'N Pieces column. We really appreciate it! I have some updates and corrections, both for our company as well as others mentioned in the column.

Our America Online contact is now Sam Chupp <VisionSam@aol.com>, who has joined us as Creative Director. We'll be publishing Sam's story/game 'karma' in the winter. Sam stresses that the lower-case k in 'karma' is intentional! Our game 'Remembrance' has become 'Reflections', a two player game which focuses on promises and true love. 'Urban Legends' is on hold at the moment, although the moderatorless Tarot-based system is still being developed and used elsewhere. By the time this sees print, our fiction/art collection 'New Visions' and the first issue of our journal 'Vision Quest' should both be available. They are available as digital books in Adobe Software's Acrobat format.

I'm no longer Industry News Editor for 'Luminary' as the magazine has unfortunately ceased publication. 'Vision Quest' does include game reviews and industry news, so feel free to send me press releases. By the way, William Spencer-Hale's AOL screen name recently changed to QMSWilliam and Sam Chupp is no longer the AOL rep for White Wolf.

A huge list of game company contact info is available over the world-wide web at `http://www.cqs.washington.edu/~surge/gaming/companies` — email `surge@io.com` to have your company added or changes made to your listing.

Visionary Publishing also has a web page at `http://www.io.com/~mjg` which includes company info and excerpts from 'Vision Quest' and 'New Visions'.

Hope this info helps! Keep up the great work!

Mitchell J. Gross
Visionary Publishing, Inc.
via the Internet

Yours was not the only correction we received to that section. An expanded and corrected and generally spiffier version is included in this month's Bits & Pieces. We hope it's useful to our Net-connected readers.

GW

Dear Mr. Blackburn,

I am writing this letter for a two-fold purpose. The first is to complement you on the latest issue. I especially enjoyed the articles on Native American magic (always nice to see something non-British/Western in fantasy games) and the piece on holy swords. Both were very well written and informative.

The second is to see if SHADIS would be interested in an article on adventuring in the slums of a city. Not only would this apply to fantasy campaigns, but I would also mention the use of such sordid surroundings in sci-fi and horror games.

I myself have been a freelance writer for several years, with gaming articles published in Dragon and White Wolf. I am currently a contributing writer for d8 Magazine as well as an editorial assistant in New York.

I would be more than happy to send you a more detailed proposal or the entire article itself should you be interested in the piece. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,
Steve Berman
via America Online

We're glad you enjoyed Navajo Magic. We try to to publish offbeat things occasionally just to keep people interested. And, as the article was written by the author of GURPS Old West, we felt that it wasn't too nonstandard.

We're always happy to see new submissions. Our revised Writers' and Artists' guidelines are available (after a long wait — sorry, folks) as this goes to press.

GW

Hi;

Are there any back issues of SHADIS or SHADIS Presents available?

If there are, how do I get them.

Thanks in advance!

Ramon Guerrero
via the Internet

We've gotten so many of these letters recently that we've reinstated our Back Issue Madness offer — back by popular demand. It's near the end of this issue — look for it!

GW

WIN A FREE PASS TO GENCON!!

Results of our "HOOK, LINE & SINKER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD CONTEST" presented in SHADIS PRESENTS 18.5 will be in our GenCon issue, #20.5.

TSR, Inc. has graciously provided the prize for this contest.

SHADIS 18.5 is available on the newsstand and in game stores everywhere!!

Dear Mr Blackburn,

I've been playing role-playing games for (oh my gosh, it's been) 16 years now. My story is fairly familiar, I suppose. I got interested in the original brown-bag D&D books, and once I got into college, I joined a gaming group and played probably half of the RPGs out there.

We were lucky enough to have a fine gaming store in town, and I remember scouring the shelves looking for modules, magazines, anything which might be interesting and fun. Unfortunately, as the industry matured, much of what was available became "slicker." While the artwork and paper quality improved, the content suffered. I lost interest in gaming around the time TSR began churning out the endless 2nd edition AD&D books. This represented to me the end of an era: corporate suits had begun producing "product" and not games.

Anyway, the reason for this little trip down memory lane is I want to congratulate you on SHADIS magazine. It has really rekindled my interest and faith in the industry. In no way am I disrespectful when I say that it is the lack of slickness in your magizine which I love the most. I applaud your decision to remain in newsprint. You even managed to surround well-written and thoughtful articles with fine artwork.

I've been reading SHADIS since about #16. Your glowing review of FUDGE inspired me to get a copy, and, having fallen in love with it, I even began a new campaign (after an absence of about 3 years). I know that gamer burnout and return is common, but something has to trigger it, and that something for me was SHADIS. Anyway, thanks.

Respectfully
Rob Ritchie
via America Online

We're always glad to hear from people who have come back to the fold. Responses to the FUDGE article have been almost uniformly positive; the FUDGE folks have promised us a third edition in the not-too-distant future. Stay tuned.

GW

This next letter was forwarded to us by the folks on the other side of the office, who are developing a card game. On our newly-appointed World Wide Web site (`http://www.isomedia.com/homes/~aeg/aeg.html` - go have a look at the SHADIS pages!) they posted a call for game suggestions and chocolate-chip cookie recipes. Here's part of one of the responses, which SHADIS now brings to you as a public service.

GW

Thinking you might be flooded with chocolate-chip cookie recipes, here's a recipe for something that's actually quicker to make than cookies yet just as much of a chocolate boost:

Almond Chocolate Sticks

8 oz. cream cheese, softened

3/4 cup sugar

3/4 cup butter or margarine, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

2 cups flour

1 pkg. (6 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips

1/2 cup slivered blanched almonds

Cream the cheese with butter till soft and blended; beat in sugar and vanilla.

Sprinkle flour and baking powder over and stir into cheese mixture. Spread in ungreased 13"x9"x2" baking pan (usual cookie sheet). Bake at 375° F for 15 minutes or till firm and lightly browned at edges.

Sprinkle chocolate over and let stand a few minutes to melt. Spread with knife till cookie layer is evenly coated, then sprinkle with almonds. Cool, then cut lengthwise into 1" strips. Cut across strips to get 4" lengths.

Makes 2 dozen sticks.

Enjoy,
Blaise Selby ❑

THIS JUST IN:
AS THIS ISSUE OF SHADIS™ WENT TO PRESS, WE RECEIVED WORD THAT DRAGON™ AND THE DUELIST™ HAD TIED FOR THE ORIGINS™ AWARD OF BEST PROFESSIONAL GAMING MAGAZINE. SHADIS CAME IN THIRD, BEHIND THE CO-WINNERS — BY THREE VOTES.

WE AT SHADIS WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE BOTH *TSR* AND *WIZARDS OF THE COAST* ON THEIR JOINT VICTORY. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GAMING COMMUNITY WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE VOTING; IT'S THE ACTIVE FANS WHO KEEP THE HOBBY ALIVE AND EXCITING FOR ALL OF US.

Love and Rocket Launchers

More From the World of Real Spies

By Dave Dollar © 1995
Art by John Kovalic and Chris Lackey © 1995

When I was in college, I was no Casanova. It wasn't until my first year in N.A.T.O. that I discovered that getting on well with women was not a matter of truth, charm and sincerity, as I had been led to believe. It was, in fact, a matter of being able to laugh at things that I did not think were funny. It also had something to do with wearing beer boxes on your head, but I've never been clear on why.

Woman: "I'd be a lot more comfortable sitting in this bar if it weren't for this darn yeast infection!"

Me: "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Yeah, that's great...Ha, Ha, Ha!"

As difficult as this sometimes turned out to be, it was successful.

Women invariably like the type of guys that slap them across the face, tell them to go for beer and blow their nose on their cashmere sweater while they're gone. This never really suited me — I'm allegeric to cashmere.

Why women always fall for jerks is anybody's guess. The solution — if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Just become what they want. So I did. However, I still have never stopped wearing beer boxes.

It's difficult to get a date for a male in his late twenties. The women our age are all either raising children, or are just coming out of bad relationships. This means that if you do manage to look harmless enough to go out with, you are either going to have a scintillating evening talking about her ex-husband's alchohol problem, or you are going to end up trying to eat your romantic T.V. dinner amidst a barrage of squirt-gun fire from her four neglected larvae. "That's a pretty neat gun Billy, let me show you mine...."

Either of these scenarios usually leads to an alcohol problem of your own.

After a year or so of this, I made a resolution: if I was going to go out on a date I would never again do it sober. I'd just get a good head start on the evening. The last time I did this was with a girl named Clarise. I had primed myself for the evening with straight burbon, chased with a shot of Pepto-Bismol and dash of Pine Sol (fresh breath is paramount.)

Four beers later, we still weren't hitting it off, so I retired to the locker room to review my strategy. Having relieved myself, I spotted a gum machine on the wall on the way out. Fearing that my breath might be losing that evergreen freshness, I decided to pop a piece. The gum was individually wrapped (a nice touch) and said 'Antiseptic' (or something like that) on the wrapper, so I figured it would do. For a buck-fifty it had better, or I was going to complain to the management.

When I got back to the table, Clarise was staring at me with a look similar to that seen on the faces of Iraqi deer caught in the headlights of an entire armored division. I tried some small talk and jokes, before I commented, "Y'know, this gum blows the most incredible bubbles, but it tastes just like rubber."

Then I blinked, and Clarise had vanished.

After that, I tried wedding rings. Someone at work had told me that they were just like magnets. They made women feel safe. Eventually I found this to be true. You were 'married,' so you were safe company — all the way up until when you try to run your hand up her thigh and become the Antichrist. By then, trying to explain that you were not really married was well beyond useless. Like trying to explain to the Secret Service that you were just trying to wound the president.

Dressing up in drag takes even more explaining.

Finally I decided to go back to that honesty and sensitivity thing that had always failed me back in college. However, without fail, they would get turned off when we broached the subject of "What do you do for a living?"

"Oh, I work for N.A.T.O. intelligence: espionage, international investigations, counter-terrorism, that kind of thing...no really! Look, I even have a gun!"

And they were gone.

The dating scene was hell until one evening, in June of '91, when I was atteding a function at the American embassy in London. I wasn't formally invited, but the words 'open bar' had awakened vast slumbering portions of my brain that had formerly been devoted to the useless information I had been required to learn in Forgery class.

With a quick visit to the Hallmark card shop and a few strokes of a Bic rollerball, I was sipping ambassadorial martinis - compliments of lots and lots of British tax dollars. I swapped peasantries with all kinds of

brass: such juicy conversation as Free Press, socialized medicine, the Redskins, how Diana was in bed — really — social diseases and how I came to be invited. When suddenly, I saw this incredible brunette standing over by the buffet. When she refused to go to bed with me, I became obsessed.

In the midst of my fool-proof "you make dinner, I'll make breakfast" line, a dark-skinned waiter pulled a sawed-off shotgun out from under his serving cart and started yelling at the crowd. He was screaming something in Pakistani (I think) that sounded like "Wanna Lotta Falafel," and while I don't even know one Pakistani pickup line, I do hablo Smith and Wesson.

I yanked the woman under the buffet table and kissed her solidly on the mouth. "I really like you!" I said. "I gotta take care of something, but after we're done here, lemme give you a lift home. Okay?"

Having accidently left my "assault-rifle-disguised-as-a pack-of-cigarettes" back on the shelf at the Sharper Image in D.C. I elected for a more impractical approach:

One of the guests at the party was the Duchess of Desenex (or something like that) and she had brought her pet poodle (who died nobly) with her. It is a little known fact that if you pick very small dogs up by their ears and spin them around, they start to squeal.

Well, perhaps that part of it is pretty well known, but what you probably don't know is that if you do it hard enough, they sound exactly like a police siren. The yap-dog in question happened to be blithely scavenging for morsels from the buffet table, so he was pretty easy to snag. As it happens, the only time I get to hear British police sirens is after no less than six dry martinis - which makes my memory of them a bit fuzzy. Poodles sound like American police sirens. Oops.

Looking back, I'm thankful that this man couldn't tell the difference.

I popped up from behind the buffet to see him sidestepping quickly toward the windows, putting his back to me. I searched my vast reserves of covert ops knowlege to determine my next move — Karate? Jiujitsu? Knife-throwing? My mental Wheel of Fortune came to rest on "Frisbee," and a moment later, the resounding 'spong' of a chafing dish impacting on bone filled the room.

Ducking back down under the table, I found Joanne performing CPR on the now quite enlongated Fifi.

"Stay down!" I lied mightily, "there's two of them!"

And kissed her again.

Unfortunately, this sham only held out long enough for the attendant nobles to drag us out from under the table. Eventually, the ruckus died down and Habib was carted out on a stretcher by armed SAS to go have a crumpet removed from his brain stem. Amid the enthusiastic British "Thank you's, God bless you's, and Who did invite you's," Joanne walked up and looked wryly at me. "You must be Carl Larson."

The rest was magic.

In addition to the relief of having a woman at my side who doesn't get turned off by my profession, it's wonderful to be out of the dating scene. I'd rather fight a grizzly bear with a rusty spoon than stand again on the singles battleground.

Final note: To simulate a British police claxon, try picking geese up by their bills with a pair of vise-grip pliers. ❑

Chinese Hermetic Magic

A New Magic System for Shadowrun™

By Kathleen Malone © 1995 ❖ Art by Richard Emond and Jesse Mohn © 1995

MOE'S BBS> files

FILES> read hermetic

HERMETIC—(xx mp) Description of Chinese hermetic tradition

FILES> d

Which method? ('?' for options) x

Archive download commencing. Type 'Ctrl-C' twice to abort...

>[Greetings, all. Just downloaded this little gem from an obscure BBS down around Dayton way, and thought it would make y'all's day a little brighter. Feel free to comment, but mess with the text and MOE will wrek y'all's dek. Happy perusal!]<

—This Spacer For Rent, SYSOP (06:37:49 / 10-24-55)

>[Just read this thing—what the frag is it, an entry from the Encyclopedia Terra? Seems to have some portions missing, too. Any explanation?]<

—Tethys (10:01:52 / 10-25-55)

>[For all I know, it could very well be... or have been... And it was downloaded as you see it here, except, as always, for the many and sundry comments.]<

—This Spacer For Rent (11:10:38 / 10-25-55)

Chinese hermetic magic, or 'mo shu,' as it is refered to by native Chinese, is a system of magic similar in some ways to the Greek-based form practiced by most mages in the Western hemisphere. First of all, both involve conjuration of entities known as 'elementals.' However, in Oriental magic the number of elementals is five, not four, which are as follows: fire, earth, water, metal and wood. Air is not included. Second, both use and cast spells in virtually the same way. However, the system of initiation is more strictly regimented in Asian magic, due to the form's apparent origin in the highly organized monastic orders that exist in China (including the Shaolin, Taoist and Buddhist orders.) As such, it is an almost unknown phenomenon in western nations.

The origin of the Chinese hermetic magic is almost completely shrouded in mystery, but by 2049, first word of this new form had come out of the Henan province's Shaolin monastery, where the largest organization of 'mo shu shi' or 'magicians' is based. These magicians seemed to have formed as an outgrowth of the gongfu tradition, using their abilities to purge evil and give aid to those in need. Like the fighting Shaolin priests, they are pacifists, spending most of their time either in meditation or practice. In other monasteries, the situation seems to differ little. In fact, it is curious that Oriental magic would be nearly identical at all three main brotherhoods, even though these orders would be separated by hundreds of miles and a tradition of seclusion.

>[Not really. I heard that the orders were all visited by a free spirit, and it taught magic to those with the ability, according to Chinese thinking, rather than western, and this was the result.]<

—Corky (00:21:11 / 10-25-55)

>[Funny, I heard the same thing, but instead of a free spirit, it was an Oriental dragon named Hwo Lung who made the visits...]<

—Cat Among The Pigeons (01:57:06 / 10-25-55)

>[You're both wrong.]<

—Huang Lang (02:18:42 / 10-25-55)

>[Oh, really? Elucidate, if you please.]<

—Cat Among The Pigeons (02:19:27 / 10-25-55)

>[I have no idea how familiar you are with Chinese history or antique trid shows, but it is a tradition at Shaolin that after a certain period of study, a pupil is sent out into the world with little more than a razor, the clothes on his back and a simple mess kit, to travel the country. One such traveller was capable of magic. She lived in seclusion for a while, training herself and developing her own ideas, then resumed her journey, visiting many places, including the aforementioned monasteries. From there, the whole thing mushroomed.]<

—Huang Lang (02:25:58 / 10-25-55)

>[A woman was the creator of this? I thought that monastic brotherhoods were just that—brotherhoods. Just how do you know all of this?]<

—Corky (02:26:33 / 10-25-55)

>[Maybe once, Cork, but not anymore. Women can shave their heads and jump around just as well as men—fortunately, mine grew back. I was with the Shaolin for more than five years for my training as a magician, and believe me, they aren't given to idle boasting (or any boasting at all.)]<

—Huang Lang (02:31:41 / 10-25-55)

>[You sound like you're no longer with them. Any reason why?]<

—Tethys (02:33:45 / 10-25-55)

>[I'd rather not talk about that.]<

—Huang Lang (02:34:19 / 10-25-55)

After 2049, the various brotherhoods formed a loose confederation, maintaining autonomy but collaborating in the training of Chinese hermetics. Known for their altruism, they were easily the most vital part of the rescue effort in the Nanking earthquake of 2051.

Nevertheless, Chinese hermetic magic is distinctive in that the conjuration of elementals is not possible until the mage has initiated at least once. With the first initiation, or level 0, the mage can conjure only a wood elemental. After the second initiation, the mage is able to conjure a metal elemental and a Great wood elemental. The initiations follow this form, through water, earth and fire, up to the sixth, or level 5, after which the mage is capable of conjuring a Great Form fire elemental. There are no known practitioners of Chinese hermetic magic beyond level 5. It is unknown as to whether this is an arbitrary stopping point, or if the mages are simply incapable of continuing.

>[Well, what does our resident expert say about this, Huang? You seem to have all the answers.]<

—Skinwalker (02:40:54 / 10-25-55)

>[Honestly, I don't know. But I would have to say that it is probably limited in some way, since all of the highest ranking mo shu shi that I knew were fifth level. However, the text of this article makes it sound like the mages are the ones who are limited in some way, incapable of continuing. Once the fifth level is reached, the mo shu shi tend to concentrate on expanding magical knowledge, concentrating often in spells, or spell design. I knew one mo shu shi, an elderly gent, who spent his entire stay at the monastery studying manipulations of various kinds. I think it was a quest of his or something.]<

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—Huang Lang (02:46:33 / 10-25-55)

>[I just scanned that new Denver rag, and it mentioned something about Triads having 'weird' magic. Is this it?]<

—Mayday (02:47:08 / 10-25-55)

>[Nope. Don't know what it is, but I'm pretty sure this ain't it. The only way to get training in this is to go to the monasteries. The monks would never accept anyone from an organized crime group, and those of us who would, ahem, leave are either untrained or are pacifistic in nature, and would slit our own legs open along the arteries before we would dishonor ourselves in such a way.]<

—Huang Lang (02:58:01 / 10-25-55)

>[Huang Lang—that means 'yellow wolf,' doesn't it?]<

—Akea Kime (03:00:22 / 10-25-55)

>[Yes, it does, Akea. She got the name because when she casts a spell, her eyes glow yellow. Pretty spooky, if you ask me.]<

—Hei Mau (03:03:47 / 10-25-55)

>[You keep out of this, Hei. For one thing, you're pretty spooky yourself, with that black cat shamanic mask of yours. For another thing, you've said yourself you don't know drek about this.]<

—Huang Lang (03:05:31 / 10-25-55)

>[Touchy, touchy. Keep this up, Huang, and no more lunches my treat at Rusty's. I'm trying to find out about this stuff, since you are usually so close-mouthed.]<

—Hei Mau (03:08:39 / 10-25-55)

Interaction of these elements is curious, certainly more complicated than Occidental elementals. Instead of the lateral 'fire<=>water' and 'earth<=>air' vulnerabilities, each elemental is vulnerable to two other elements. For example, wood is vulnerable to both metal and fire. These vulnerabilities are listed below in the description of each respective elemental.

>[Wow, that kind of makes sense. I mean, metal axes chop down trees, and fire burns them down. It's kind of like a big game of Paper, Scissors, Rock, huh?]<

—Judge Doom (03:16:07 / 10-25-55)

>[That's as good an analogy as any I've ever heard.]<

—Huang Lang (03:18:28 / 10-25-55)

It is also curious to note that earth elementals, which are vulnerable to wood and metal, are also vulnerable to Western air elementals.

>[While this is true, it is certainly not to the same extent. On average, earth elementals conjured by Chinese hermetics are not as seriously injured by air elementals as are their Western counterparts.]<

—Huang Lang (03:22:17 / 10-25-55)

Like Western elementals, these spirits may aid in the casting or sustaining of spells of and appropriate type: fire aids combat spells; metal, detection; wood, health; earth, manipulation; and water, illusion.

>[Wait a minute, let me clean the grease out of my jack. Did this thing say that there are wood elementals that help with healing spells?]<

—Tethys (03:27:12 / 10-25-55)

>[You scan correctly. In fact, that is the first type of elemental you would learn to conjure, were you a mo shu shi.]<

—Huang Lang (03:34:19 / 10-25-55)

Conjuration of these elementals is not as time consuming as it is for Western hermetics. For a typical force two elemental of any type, conjuration time ranges from one to six minutes; for Great Form elementals, roughly three to twenty minutes. While not as quick as a typical shamanic conjuration, this is a substantial decrease in time.

>[It has come in handy, too. Not that I don't appreciate my own spirits, but the elementals are quite useful.]<

—Hei Mau (03:39:57 / 10-25-55)

As stated previously, initiation is necessary in order to conjure elementals at all. When beginning, only watchers are able to be summoned. With the first initiation, wood elementals can be summoned, and the metaplanes are opened for all subsequent initiations. Each future initiation requires an astral quest, but only to the metaplane of the elemental acquired with

the previous initiation. Like other forms of initiation, though, the mage gains access to metamagic after the first.

>[Just curious, Huang—what level are you?]<

—Akea Kime (03:49:36 / 10-25-55)

>[Oh, the temerity! Asking a mage about her initiation level is like asking about her age...particularly an elf.]<

—Hei Mau (03:51:44 / 10-25-55)

>[Jeez, Hei, just tell everyone, why don't you? I thought you Cat types were supposed to be hoarders of secrets.]<

—Huang Lang (03:53:22 / 10-25-55)

>[We are, we are—but we also like to play games.]<

—Hei Mau (03:54:04 / 10-25-55)

>[Both of you knock it off, or else. I know where the both of you live, and I fix those tortoises of yours, too. Wouldn't take much...]<

—This Spacer For Rent, SYSOP (03:56:33 / 10-25-55)

Material components for these conjurations are inexpensive substance-wise - simple chunks of iron pyrite, dirt, or sheets of flash paper with symbols written on them - but the amount of time and effort that goes into producing them properly leads to a price nearly commensurate with western components. Due to the prices and the extreme rarity of those willing to sell conjuring components, most hermetics are taught to produce their own.

>[This is it? What happened to the rest?]<

—Tethys (04:01:17 / 10-25-55)

>[Looks like it, Teth. It's almost like notes for an encyclopedia entry. I checked the BBS where Spacer found this, and it seems to have come from a certain paper manufacturer down Dayton way, the same one that prints the Encyclopedia Terra. Somehow, it made it's way into the BBS. First time I've ever heard of this though, but I looked at the new encyclopedia, and apparently this entry didn't make it. It looks pretty sparse, I know, which is probably why it was rejected. Considering the current state of China, though, its surprising that the researcher got even this much. It is indeed fortunate that we seem to have an expert online, though. So, Huang, what's the deal with the components?]<

—Parsifal (04:05:18 / 10-25-55)

>[Whoever wrote this wasn't kidding. In order to buy the components pre-made, you must (1) be a Chinese hermetic, (2) know another Chinese hermetic (no mean feat here in UCAS) who is willing to sell components, or (2a) still be on amicable terms with the Chinese 'government,' so they will allow the package out of the country, if you can convince a hermetic there to make them, (3) be willing to wait a month or more, and (4) being independently wealthy doesn't hurt, either. It takes most of a weekend to produce just one unit, so forget about bulk orders. Of course, none of you will ever have to worry about this. What I'm saying is, it's just easier and less of a hassle to do it yourself.]<

—Huang Lang (04:10:53 / 10-25-55)

>[Why does it take so long? The writer makes it sound like you could just pick up a clot of dirt or a stick out of your yard and use it.]<

—Corky (04:12:19 / 10-25-55)

>[I can—and often have—just picked up stuff out of my yard to use as components, but I can't just pick it up off the ground and stick it in my pocket to use later. There's a whole system of ritual involved, including meditation, chanting, symbolic cleansing and the like—I won't go into particulars here, because each case is different. For example, last weekend I holed myself up for two days and did nothing but make a component. You see, it isn't a system in which you buy a certain number of units to eventually summon an elemental of a specific size. It's more like going through the summoning process when making the materials, then actually summoning the spirit at a later time. Boy, I hope you understood that.]<

—Huang Lang (04:19:18 / 10-25-55)

>[It sounds like a genie in the bottle sort of thing, and very personal, too. No wonder it's hard to find someone willing to sell components.]<

—Klite (04:21:57 / 10-25-55)

>[Almost, but not quite, Klite. It's rather hard to explain, and even harder to experience without at least being a magician of some type. But yes, when someone puts that much effort into making it, if they sell it at all, it is with the greatest reluctance. The component becomes a link between the physical world and the spirit. Think of it as selling your power focus, or your medicine lodge. That's how your average (?) Chinese hermetic feels about selling his or her components. Anyway, we were all taught how to create the appropriate components at each level of initiation, depending on what elementals we were learning to summon. Since I never made it to fourth level, though, I haven't the faintest idea how to create components for fire elementals, or great form earth. And yes, there is a difference.]<

—Huang Lang (04:29:26 / 10-25-55)

>[I just came back from China (don't ask) and I saw that there was instituted a system of sashes for each level of initiation. What do you know about this?]<

—Parsifal (04:32:28 / 10-25-55)

>[Nothing, Pars. Sounds kinda artificial to me. Maybe it's something instituted by local warlords to be able to tell at a glance what level the mage is. I don't know that any of the monasteries would go with it, though. As I said, it's too artificial. They aren't really that obsessed with keeping track.]<

—Huang Lang (04:35:13 / 10-25-55)

>[I've heard whispers about the sashes. It's said that the remnants of the Chinese government are training their own hermetics. The sashes are like rank indicators, colonels, captains, and such.]<

—Klite (04:37:32 / 10-25-55)

>[Shenme?!?! I hope you're farcing, Klite. The brotherhoods worked hard to make sure that the government couldn't get their hands on this.]<

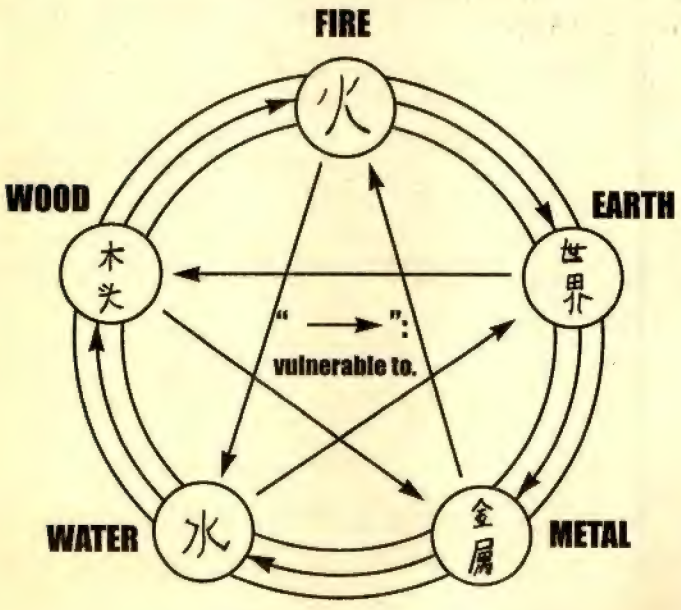
—Huang Lang (04:40:09 / 10-25-55)

>[Maybe they didn't get it from them. You said that this form was developed by a female Shaolin. Maybe they developed this themselves.]<

—Skinwalker (04:43:46 / 10-25-55)

>[Oh, boy.]<

—Huang Lang (04:44:38 / 10-25-55)



Rules - So You Want To Be A Chinese Hermetic...

There are several methods by which you can create a Chinese hermetic. The first is the simplest - just create your character, choosing priority A or B for magic, depending on your character's standing (human or meta), and proclaim her a Chinese hermetic. Spellcasting ability and rules are identical to that set forth in the rules for regular hermetics. Simple, yes, but that character cannot summon elementals. Elementals can only be summoned by initiates, and the only method which they can initiate is through groups - all of which are in China. Essentially, this creates a Chinese character who acts more like a sorcery adept than a full mage. In fact, the only difference between the mo shu shi and a sorcery adept would be that an uninitiated Chinese hermetic could summon watchers.

For those of you who want to create Chinese hermetics who can summon elementals, I have devised a way to do so that, granted, will create a more powerful char-

acter (after all, she will be an initiate starting out,) but will also eliminate the need for much of the game time being taken up with surreptitious trips to China whenever the character has some extra karma to spend. Just roll 1d6, and multiply it by 10 - this will give you the amount of 'karma' the person creating the mage may use to initiate. This 'karma' can be used only for initiation, is spent according to group initiation rules (after all, unless you've got some variant of this going, the mage will be trained in a group setting - a monastery,) and any extra will disappear after the character has initiated appropriately, which may include ordeals (more about that later.) Rule of six applies, so watch those dice! Remember also that there are no initiates beyond fifth level, so don't let someone create a level ten Chinese hermetic, unless you have some idea how they would operate in your own campaign. Of course, all of this falls into GM discretion, so you can make it 1d6x5, drop the rule of six, do initiations according to solo rules, or whatever floats your dory.

For your further edification, here is an example of character creation. Joe Runner wants to create Bofu Chen (that's Uncle Chen), an elven Chinese hermetic. He chooses priority A for metahumanity (elven), B for magic (meta-mage) and so on. After spending points and money, he rolls 1d6, and multiplies the result by 10. He rolls a five, which gives him 50 points to use for initiation. With fifty points, Bofu may initiate to level 2, using 42 of his points as per rules in the Grimoire for group initiation [(6+0) * 2=12, (6+1) * 2=14, (6+2) * 2=16, 12+14+16=42]. This leaves eight points. If he opts to let Bofu stand at level 2, the extra eight points just disappear.

If Joe wants to try to squeeze in an extra initiation (he really wants to be able to conjure earth and great form water elementals), he can opt to take ordeals at any or all levels. However, certain ordeals are not known in China. For example, the ordeals of asceticism, deed, meditation, and oath are in common use: familiar is also used, but does not give a reduction in karma, nor does geas. Since astral quests are required for initiation, they do not reduce karmic expenditure, either. Thesis is unknown. If Joe chooses to use ordeals at all levels, he can initiate Bofu to level 3 for only 44 points (such a deal!) with six left over that disappear [(6+0) * 1.5=9, (6+1) * 1.5=10.5 or 10, (6+2) * 1.5=12, (6+3) * 1.5=13.5 or 13 (remember, according to the rules, and I quote: "Always round down." It's on page 38 in the 2nd edition Grimoire, for those of you keeping score.) 9+10+11+12=44]. My advice? None, really, except that after the character has started playing, initiations get very expensive. But more on that later.

Chinese sorcery adepts, should you wish to create them, would function identically to regular sorcery adepts. Chinese conjurer adepts differ in that they do have access to astral space, but only after initiation. After all, it's hard to have access to all those great form spirits if you can't go on the quests! Elemental adepts, as such, do not exist.

Now comes the interesting part - conjuring the elementals themselves.

How To Win Spirits and Influence Elementals

Conjuration of Oriental elementals is a somewhat complicated enterprise. First of all, good components are difficult to come by. In order to prepare a component, the mage must go through a complete summoning process of several hours or more, depending on force. For a component used to summon a great form elemental, the time is doubled. Each elemental requires a different type of material to be used in its summoning, and the material should be appropriate for the elemental type.

Let's say Joe Runner wants Bofu Chen to prepare a component to conjure a metal elemental. First, he goes out and finds a chunk of iron pyrite or other metal - it doesn't matter what kind or where he found it, as long as the chunk is reasonably clean (we're talking physically clean, as in free of dirt, grime, etc. - innate magic has nothing to do with it. That comes in later.) After finding a nice melted tin can, he wipes off the bits of adhesive from the old label, crumbs of dirt and other nasties. After taking it home, the real fun begins.

Bofu begins chanting, or meditating, or cleaning the tin bit with purified water or whatever. The thing is, he's got to do this for two hours per force rating of the intended elemental. If he wants to be able to conjure a force 5 elemental, he's got to do this for 10 hours. If he wants it to be great form, it's four hours per force rating, for a total of 20 hours of chanting, meditating, and candle burning - talk about an all-nighter! At the end of all this, he rolls his conjuring dice to see if all his hard work gained a payoff. The target number is equal to the force of the spirit, as for plain-vanilla Western elementals. Joe rolls Bofu's six conjuring dice, and gets 10, 5, 4, 4, 1, 1. This means that Bofu now has a component that will allow him to later conjure a metal elemental who will do two services. If a great form elemental is desired, an immediate astral quest is taken, as per Grimoire rules. Most of the extra time that is taken in preparing the component for a great form is also preparation for the astral quest.

Drain is taken after the whole ball of wax. Roll Charisma dice to determine drain: the target number is equal to the force of the intended spirit. For a great form spirit, multiply the spirit's force by 1.5, and use that as the target. If the mage passes out from drain, the component becomes useless - a nice doorstop if it's large and heavy enough, but otherwise no help.

INITIATION CHART SASHES (as mentioned by Parsifal)

No level	Watchers	Turtle, white
Level 0	Wood	Tiger, yellow
Level 1	Metal, Great Wood	One-toed dragon, red
Level 2	Water, Great Metal	Two-toed dragon, green
Level 3	Earth, Great Water	Three-toed dragon, blue
Level 4	Fire, Great Earth	Four-toed dragon, purple
Level 5	Great Fire	Five-toed ('Imperial') dragon, black

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If this all seems a bit fuzzy to you, think of it this way. During the preparation of the component, the mage is doing most of the work of summoning the spirit. The spirit comes to him in astral, or manifest form if the conjurer is an adept and uninitiated, and decides if the mage is worthy of his servitude (using criteria only the spirit knows.) If so, the spirit agrees that the component will become a link, sort of like a spell lock, which the mage can activate later in order to 'summon' the spirit. If the spirit decides the mage is not worthy, it leaves, and the mage has effectively used up the greater part of several hours to a day for nothing. The problem with this is that the spirits are notoriously capricious, and may not even answer the 'summons' when the mage activates the link until it's too late for it to be of any use.

Now that the mage has the component, what does he do with it? Let's say Bofu gets into a tight spot, and wants his elemental to help him beat up the mean ol' go-gangers that are after his hide for invading their turf. In order to summon the spirit, he must first have the component on his person. He checks his pocket, and lo and behold, the lump of slagged tin is there. He cradles it in his palm, and quietly begs the elemental to come out and save his butt. To do this, he rolls his Charisma dice, with a target equal to half the spirit's force, rounding down, with a minimum of two. He must get at least one success for each point of force the spirit has in order for the spirit to come out, and each roll of the Charisma dice equals one minute of time passing. Joe rolls Bofu's Charisma dice (a measly three), with a target of 2 (spirit force is 5, divided by 2 is 2.5, rounded down is two.) This is not an actual summoning, and no drain is taken here - this is simply a representation of the mage's persuasive powers in getting the spirit to do what he wants. He gets 6, 4, and 2, but he still needs two more successes in order to get the force 5 metal elemental to come out and play. The gangers laugh and toss jeers at the hapless mage in the midst of what appears to be a nervous breakdown as he begs a piece of melted tin to help him. Another minute of frantic cajoling results in 6, 5, 2, the component link slags down and disintegrates, and the spirit deigns to appear, scaring the bejesus out of the gangers, who never saw a pile of metal with legs before.

For great form elementals, it's even more difficult. Instead of dividing the force by two, the force of the spirit is the target, and the mage still needs to get a number of successes equal to the spirit's force. If the mage is on the receiving end of an abject failure, that is, a roll entirely consisting of ones, a suitable catastrophe could happen at GM's discretion, anything from the component link being completely destroyed to the elemental coming out and aiding the enemy - and an offended spirit is nothing to sneeze at. As you could probably imagine, those with low Charisma ratings will have a harder time convincing their new friends to come out than those who have high ones. Once the mage can get the elemental to come out once, the component link disappears, and the spirit functions as a regular elemental.

These component links don't last forever if the elemental goes unsummoned, though. It may very well get impatient, waiting for the mage to pull out the bit of wood or vial of water and use the old Blarney. So the component links have a 'shelf life' or an 'expiration date,' if you prefer. Suffice it to say that the link lasts a time equal to the spirit's force rating in weeks, multiplied by the mage's Charisma. Since Bofu's Charisma is 3, he can expect to have his component link for the force 5 metal elemental to last for 15 weeks (5 * 3=15). If the spirit was a force 3, he would only have nine weeks. Lower force spirits have lower intelligence, and therefore less patience. For great form spirits, divide the result by two, rounding down. If Bofu's metal elemental had been a great form spirit, the component link would only last for seven weeks (15/2=7.5=7).

Of course, all of this begs the question - what can these elementals do besides scare the drek out of hostile gangers? Read on, MacDuff!

The Care and Feeding of Oriental Elementals

Oriental elementals are different from Western elementals. Oh, sure, they do the same things, like engulf powers, aid in sustaining spells and such. However, they are also more vulnerable. Each elemental is vulnerable to two types of other elements, not just one. Makes things a whole lot more interesting, neh? Note also that the vulnerabilities are different for some elementals. For example, fire is vulnerable to water, but not vice versa. Just remember that most of the elementals are vulnerable to at least one element that has an analog in Western hermeticism (fire, earth, water). An Oriental fire elemental would be vulnerable to earth as well as water.

Vulnerabilities are handled the same way for Oriental elementals as for Western elementals - in a simple clash. Let's say Bofu's metal elemental mixes it up with a Chinese fire elemental, force 3. The fire elemental disappears, completely overwhelmed by Bofu's buddy, but the metal spirit's force is reduced by three, so it's now a force 2 until it's given time to heal. Same thing happens if the spirit fights with a water elemental.

Well, most of the elementals the mage will come in contact with will be of the Western tradition, unless you're running in Hong Kong (and good luck to you, too.) This part is even simpler that conjuring and summoning the spirit in the first place. The Chinese elementals are vulnerable to Western elementals in exactly the same way. That is, the same thing would happen to the metal elemental if it met up with a fire or water elemental of the Western tradition.

There is one minor exception to this, though, and that is the Chinese earth elemental. According to the chart, it is vulnerable to wood and metal, neither of which exist in the Western tradition. Its Western analog is vulnerable to air. The Chinese earth spirit is vulnerable to air too, but to a lesser degree. If such a clash should occur, the reduction to the earth elemental's force should be equal to the air elemental's force divided by two, rounding down. A force 5 Chinese earth elemental fighting with a force 7 air elemental would then be reduce by three (7/2=3.5=3) to force 2. The air elemental would be reduced by the earth's force to 2 (7-5=2), as in any other clash. Combat between elementals not vulnerable to each other is handled exactly as in the Shadowrun rules.

Stats for each of the elementals are as follows, using the format in the Shadowrun rules, and based somewhat on stats for Western elementals of like types:

FIRE ELEMENTAL
Body: F+1

Charisma: F
Essence: (F)A
Quickness: (F+2) * 3
Intelligence: F
Reaction: F+1
Strength: F-2
Willpower: F
Attacks: (F)M as Ranged Combat (skill=Reaction); Range=F * 2 meters.
Powers: Engulf, Flame Aura, Flame Projection, Guard, Manifestation, Movement.
AIDS COMBAT SPELLS.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to Water and Earth.
Appearance: Vaguely dracoform, sheathed in flame.

METAL ELEMENTAL

Body: F+5
Charisma: F
Essence: F(A)
Quickness: (F-3) * 2
Intelligence: F
Reaction: F-3
Strength: F+5
Willpower: F
Attacks: (F)S as Unarmed Combat (skill=Reaction); +1 reach.
Powers: Engulf*, Manifestation, Movement.
AIDS DETECTION SPELLS.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to Fire and Water.
Appearance: Humanoid, blocky, crusty metal.
* - Victim must resist (Essence+1)S damage from the crushing weight of the spirit. Impact armor helps, but not ballistic.

WOOD ELEMENTAL

Body: F+4
Charisma: F
Essence: (F)A
Quickness: (F-3) * 2
Intelligence: F
Reaction: F-1
Strength: F+5
Willpower: F
Attacks: (F)M as Unarmed Combat (skill=Reaction); +2 reach.
Powers: Engulf*, Manifestation, Movement.
AIDS HEALTH SPELLS.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to Metal and Fire.
Appearance: Think Ent, like in Tolkien- a tree with eyes, arms, and legs.
* - Victim must resist (F)M as whiplike branches coil around his body and crush him. Impact armor helps, but not ballistic.

EARTH ELEMENTAL

Body: F+4
Charisma: F
Essence: F(A)
Quickness: (F-2) * 2
Intelligence: F
Reaction: F-2
Strength: F+4
Willpower: F
Attacks: (F)S as Unarmed Combat (skill=Reaction); +1 reach.
Powers: Engulf, Manifestation, Movement.
AIDS MANIPULATION SPELLS.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to Wood and Metal.
Appearance: Gnomelike in shape, sometimes rocky.

WATER ELEMENTAL

Body: F+2
Charisma: F
Essence: F(A)
Quickness: F * 2
Intelligence: F
Reaction: F-1
Strength: F
Willpower: F
Attacks: (F)S Stun as Unarmed Combat (skill=Force).
Powers: Engulf, Manifestation, Movement.
AIDS ILLUSION SPELLS.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable to Earth and Wood.
Appearance: A mass of murky water, vaguely reptilian.

What To Do With Your Chinese Hermetic Now That You've Got 'Im

It's all too easy to think that now that character creation is over and you know how to conjure elementals, things should be smooth sailing from now on. Not on your life, pengyou (Chinese for 'chummer.' Learning more than you thought from this article, eh?)

Having a Chinese hermetic character can be hard on the ol' karma. With all the teaching that goes along with becoming an initiate, figure on spending two times more karma than you would for a Western hermetic. If your character had stayed at the monastery, then it would still be at normal group cost, but if he did, he wouldn't be a shadowrunner! It'll be difficult to get back in, too, since chances are your character was either thrown out in disgrace or forced to leave for some reason. Otherwise, your mage would still be in the monastery.

Since all of the teachers are currently in China, plan on spending oodles of nuyen (or dollars, or punts, or pounds) and time buying plane tickets, cutting through red tape, finding places to stay, keeping your mage out of the clutches of the government, convincing the monastery hierarchy to take him back, and other little details that make life in the Sixth World interesting.

Also, since your character will be from China (where else?), you'll have to spend some of your creation skill points or your very first karma buying some English lan-

guage. Playing an English-illiterate immigrant may be an interesting challenge for some, but most will quickly tire of the pantomime game, so get that language in early.

Astral quests are mandatory for each level past 0. Therefore, there is no reduction in karma expenditure for this. The quest involves going to only one new metaplane per level, though, so a mage initiating to level 1 would only be required to go to the metaplanes of metal (a new one) and wood (a familiar one, while learn conjuring techniques for great form.) The only ordeal not used is thesis, but geas and familiar do not give a reduction in karma.

Keep in mind that in no case have Chinese hermetics initiated past level 5. Once level 5 is reached, the mage should concentrate on learning spells or increasing knowledge of sorcery and conjuring. Western initiations are absolutely not compatible, so if your character starts out a Chinese hermetic, he or she stays that way. Of course, since initiations past character creation have double karma cost, it should be a while before anyone will have to worry about that. This all falls into GM discretion, as you probably already know, so feel free to make it more or less expensive, expand or contract the number of conjurings learned in initiation, or even figure out for yourself what happens in your world when a Chinese hermetic initiates to 6th level.

The only teachers of this particular form live in China in remote monasteries. There should be very rare to no access to initiate teaching at the street level. After a few years, this should change a bit, but since this is new to the western world, any access to fellow hermetics should be almost like a quest, requiring the expenditure of many resources.

Otherwise, assume rules not specifically mentioned in this article are the same as those found in the Shadowrun rules and sourcebooks. Following is a sample character and a magic group. As always, if something doesn't fit in your world, remold it to your heart's content. After all, this is only a game.

Sample Mage:

NAME: Donghui Wu

STREET NAME: Huang Lang (Yellow Wolf)

ARCHETYPE: Chinese Hermetic Mage, Level 3 Initiate

RACE/SEX: Chinese Elven Female

HEIGHT: 5' 11"

WEIGHT: 132

EYE COLOR: Black

HAIR COLOR: Black

AGE: 25

BIRTHPLACE: Nanking, China

Attributes

BODY: 2

CHARISMA: 6

ESSENCE: 6

QUICKNESS: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 4

BODY INDEX: 2

STRENGTH: 2

WILLPOWER: 6

MAGIC: 9

REACTION: 3

INITIATIVE DICE: 1d6

Pools

KARMA: 1

HACKING: N/A

TEAM KARMA: N/A

COMBAT: 6

MAGIC: 6

CONTROL: N/A

TASK: N/A

Skills And Languages

Sorcery	6
Conjuring	5
English	4
(Germanic)	1
Unarmed Combat	4

Contacts

NAME	ARCHETYPE
Radar	Fixer-Toledo, Ohio
Thad Gustav	Metahuman Rights Activist

Armor

TYPE	CONCL.	BLSTC.	IMPACT
Jacket	9	5	3

Gear

Wrist Phone

Spells

TYPE	FORCE
Manabolt	4
Physical Mask	3
Cure D Disease	4
Heal	4

Bound Spirits

None - can conjure wood, great wood, metal, great metal, water, great water and earth elementals.

History

Wouldn't you like to know? She isn't talking.

Sample Monastery

NAME: Lungde Mo shu (Dragon's Magic)

TYPE: Initiatory

MEMBERS: 20, but can sustain more.

LIMITATIONS: Chinese only (so far). Hermetics only.

LOCATION: Shaolin monastery in Henan province.

STRICTURES: Attendance (Constant until level 5 is reached. Afterwards, initiate may either leave or remain and teach), Obedience.

RESOURCES: Moderate to High. Funded partially by remaining government, partially by private donors. Some small amount also comes from contributions by locals, in repayment for healing services. This is not asked for, but never refused, and is returned to the monastery to cover expenses.

CUSTOMS: This group can be seen as a combination religious monastery/danwei (work commune.) The monastery is always looking for magically capable children, and when one is found, enters the monastery (with the parents' permission) at roughly age 10 or 12. Refusals are rare, since it is considered an honor to have a child at the monastery. The mages usually spend about two years per level from non-initiate to level 5 (14 years total,) but some take more or less time, as all are taught one-to-one at their own pace. Members are also taught unarmed combat. All members of the monastery, magic capable or not, contribute their talents to the community around them in times of need. Donations are never asked for when rendering aid, but are not refused if offered. The group is also dedicated to research, and is currently working to unearth ancient knowledge of Chinese magic. If the strictures are broken, the mage is subject to a review, and if he is found guilty, he must perform an appropriate deed, or else be, upon refusal, forcibly ejected from the group. ❑

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Coming this September:

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Bringing Mel Gibson's Braveheart Into Your Campaign

By Rob Vaux

Photographs courtesy of Paramount Pictures, Inc. © 1995

The Scottish army stared grimly across the vale at the countless rows of English soldiers before them. They had come from hundreds of miles away to fight for their country's freedom, but the odds looked bleak and the nobility who had led them here seemed more willing to bargain for land than conduct a legitimate battle.

William Wallace stood with his entourage at the forefront of the commoners, watching as the banner of truce was lowered and the two sets of leaders began dickering about title and property. He hadn't come here to watch a debate, and he wasn't interested in seeing the English march away unbloodied and victorious. Casting a contemptuous glance at the nobles gathered in the center of the field, he spurred his horse forward to join them.

"Where are ye goin'?" Hamish, his chief lieutenant, called after him. Wallace stopped and turned, his blue eyes blazing from his woad-dabbed face.

"I'm goin' te pick a fight!" he growled. Hamish nodded, then looked at the other lieutenants.

"Well, we did na' git dressed up fer nuthin'..."

The exploits of thirteenth century knight Sir William Wallace and the bid he led for Scottish independence were brought to life this summer in the Mel Gibson movie *Braveheart*. An epic of over three hours, *Braveheart* chronicles the Scotsman's early rise to prominence, his stunning victory at the Battle of Stirling, and his eventual betrayal at the hands of his own kinsman.

Gibson and screenwriter Randall Wallace have done a remarkable job of bringing Wallace's achievements to life, and of exploring some of the very human reasons behind his legendary status. While wargamers and history buffs may already be familiar with Wallace and his part in the war for Scottish independence, the film provides personal characterizations and story material that allows him to enter a more traditional role-playing environment.

This article is intended as a guide to help gamemasters introduce Wallace and the other characters of *Braveheart* into their campaign. While Scotland may not exist in a fantasy setting, the situations and personalities can easily translate into any capacity GMs see fit.

History

Note: what follows is a legitimate history which has been intertwined with the narrative of the film. As such, certain fictitious creations of the filmmakers have been placed alongside more accurate events.

While *Braveheart* remains fairly loyal to historical fact, there is much which can only be speculated on, and the natural need for plot and character must sometimes take precedence over painstaking accuracy. This summation should not be taken as gospel truth.

In addition, much of the movie's plot is revealed here. If you haven't seen the film and want to keep the surprises fresh, put this article away until you have been fully indoctrinated.

Braveheart takes place during the last few decades of the thirteenth century. The High Middle Ages were in full swing, and the feudal system was firmly established across the British Isles. For the past one

hundred years, relations between England and Scotland had been fairly cordial.

In 1286, however, King Alexander III of Scotland died, and four years later his granddaughter followed him, leaving no heir to the throne. Various Scottish nobles began squabbling for the position, but it was England's King Edward I - called 'The Longshanks' - who ultimately stepped in. He forced the Scots to acknowledge him as lord superior of Scotland, then installed a proxy ruler, John de Balliol, in his stead. Soon after (1296), he invaded and conquered Scotland himself, imprisoning the hapless de Balliol and declaring himself king.

About this time, Wallace entered the picture. Returning from a pilgrimage abroad in 1297, he settled near his home village of Lanark and began courting his childhood sweetheart, Murron. Despite her father's adamant refusal to let him see her, their courtship continued, and their familiar infatuation quickly blossomed into full-blown love. They were secretly married soon thereafter.

Unfortuantely, their happiness was short-lived. An English soldier from the local garrison had taken a shine to Murron and attempted to rape her the day after the wedding. Wallace intervened and beat the man severely before effecting an escape. Murron was captured by other soldiers and brought before the local magistrate, who executed her in an attempt to draw Wallace out.

Enraged, Wallace and a band of supporters slaughtered the entire garrison and killed the magistrate. Hunted and on the run, he fled into the hills and began a guerrilla war against the occupying English. Soon, a disciplined army of commoners in open revolt against the crown had formed around him.

Edward meanwhile, had begun a campaign in France, and left the pacification of Scotland to his weak and effete son, Prince Edward. The Prince dispatched an army north under the Earl of Surrey, who met Wallace's forces on the fields of Stirling on September 11, 1297.

The Scottish nobles who had appeared there in support of Wallace saw the confrontation as a chance to increase their holdings. The English army greatly outnumbered them, and had heavy cavalry to boot, which was considered nigh unstoppable at the time. The nobles hoped they could bargain with the English for lands and titles, but had no intention of actually fighting. Wallace had other ideas.

After harshly baiting the English into attacking, Wallace surprised the cavalry with formations of spearmen, and outflanked the remaining forces with his own horse-mounted troops. The English found themselves overwhelmed by a numerically inferior force and were slaughtered almost to a man. The Battle of Stirling was a stunning victory for the Scots, and Wallace was knighted by the noblemen soon thereafter.

By the end of the month, Wallace had most of Scotland free of occupying forces, and commenced an invasion of England in October, which culminated in the capture of York. King Edward had just returned from France, and was enraged to see these upstart barbarians threatening his kingdom. He sent his daughter-in-law, Princess Isabelle, to negitiate with Wallace while he assembled another army to remove the Scottish threat. The Princess became

entranced by Wallace's passion, however, and began secretly aiding his cause soon thereafter.

Unfortunately for Wallace, some of his older allies were not so committed. The Scottish nobles had given only him grudging support and many felt they could enhance their favor with Edward by selling him out. Chief among these was Robert the Bruce, who sympathized with Wallace's position, but was limited by the nobility's politics and by the desires of his invalid father. Along with several others, the Bruce planned to betray Wallace to Edward at the first opportunity.

Edward's army met Wallace again at the Battle of Falkirk on July 22, 1298. This time, the Scottish nobles refused to support him and Wallace was abandoned on the field by forces he had counted on. He suffered a crushing defeat, his military might was shattered, and he himself barely escaped with his life. The Bruce witnessed it all from King Edward's side.

For the next few years, Wallace led the life of a guerrilla fighter, aided by the loyalty of a few close friends, the legends of his prowess and the discreet aid of Princess Isabelle. Isabelle had come to harbor a deep love for the Scotsman, and the two managed to consummate a brief romance before circumstances forced them apart.

The nobles approached Wallace again in 1305, offering to stand beside him and make another serious attempt at Scottish independence. It was another ruse, however, and on August 5, he was captured near Glasgow by a fellow countryman, Sir John de Menteith. He was taken to London, tried, and executed for treason on August 23, although he maintained he had never sworn allegiance to Edward.

Wallace's death spurred Robert the Bruce to abandon Edward and embrace the commoner's cause. The betrayal at Falkirk has affected Edward deeply, and he vowed to make amends for it any way he could. While he had Edward's confidence at Wallace's execution, it became apparent soon thereafter that he had no intention of letting the Longshanks have his way any longer. He was crowned king on March 25, 1306 and promptly declared Scotland an independent country.

Unfortunately, his new-found patriotic fervor did not initally translate into military prowess. He subsequently suffered several crushing defeats, and was forced into hiding off the coast of Ireland.

Fortunes changed with the transition of power in England. Edward I died in 1307, and Robert took the opportunity to launch a new campaign to take back his country. Edward II demonstrated none of the competence and resolve of his father, which aided the Bruce in a series of decisive military victories. He moved south quickly, gathering momentum and support as he went. His crusade climaxed at the Battle of Bannockburn on June 24, 1314, where forces led by the King himself were routed.

Scotland's independence thereafter was secured. The pope recognized the kingdom's legitimacy in 1323, and England accepted the independence of its northern neighbor at the Treaty of Northhampton in 1328. Edward II had been deposed and imprisoned by Isabelle one year earlier, and died that September, probably through violence. Robert I reigned for less than one year before his own death of leprosy in 1329.

Themes and Ideas of *Braveheart*

One of the central themes in *Braveheart* is the willingness of its characters to sacrifice themselves for higher ideals. The Scottish revolutionaries in general - and Wallace in particular - have all made tremendous sacrifices in the pursuit of a free country, and are willing to die for it. Wallace's unbending, passionate commitment to the cause pervades every facet of his being, and he cannot be deterred by anything.

If the players are to play Wallace or be a part of Wallace's cause, they should exercise a similar passion. The film's noblemen were portrayed as villainous mercenaries whom Edward bought off with land and titles. Most players are used to receiving monetary rewards and may exercise similar greed when confronted with the situation. This will not work, and characters evincing such traits should be saved for another campaign. Wallace cannot offer them riches or nobility or rewards. What he can offer them is the possibility of freedom, of independence from tyranny and the machinations of evil men. The players need to understand and accept that before they become involved in his fight.

The sort of passion Wallace exercised forms the crux of a second theme, possibly the most important of the story. *Braveheart* embodies the dichotomy between the huge epic of a full-out war and the personal stories at the middle of it. The two acheive a symbiosis that is vital to maintaining the atmosphere of the film.

Other movies show small people caught up in huge conflicts, but rarely are those conflicts so deeply rooted in the stories of those small people. Wallace joined the rebellion to avenge the death of his wife; his leadership is characterized by friendships with Hamish and Stephen, and the camaraderie their shared struggle brings. The enemies they face on the battlefield are individual men with unique quirks and attributes. Even the great nobles and kings are portrayed in personal detail, and the machinations which decided the fate of the nation had some very human faces behind them.

At the same time, this doesn't detract from the sheer size of the production. The battles and conflicts were filmed on an epic scale with a cast of over two thousand, emphasizing the chaos and spectacle that such battles embodied. The wide-open spaces of Scotland and Ireland are illustrated in larger-than-life grandeur, as civilization has only just begun to make its imprint upon the land. And the film's three-hour length presents a story that cannot fit into an concise summary, stretching over the founding history of an entire country.

In the middle of all this lies the central characters, whose personal interactions causes ripples that expand far beyond the scope of the individual. The balance between small and large is vital to establishing the feeling of *Braveheart*.

Fortunately, in a fantasy RPG setting, this is very easy. If the players are using their own characters, they should know Wallace personally. They should fight alongside Hamish and Campbell, and should recognize the faces of their enemies. At the same time, they should understand the ramifications of their fight, and the effects it may have beyond their own personal lives.

The battles they participate in should be described from their perspective, but should contain far more combatants than they can see. Miniatures and descriptions of large scale movements will destroy this feeling; keep it personal, but make it clear that thousands are taking part in the same conflict. When the battle is won or lost, or if some political development has occured, make sure the players see the ramifications of it - physical, cultural and political - in the homes and villages they pass through. This can be done very quickly with a little care and attention to detail, and experienced GMs may be surprised at how well their own methods embody this theme.

Bringing Braveheart Into Your Campaign

Players and GMs may want to stick purely with the film and with historical fact in designing a *Braveheart* campaign: playing Wallace or Robert the Bruce, skirmishing with English troops, etc. Such a campaign can be brought off with little more than a viewing of the movie and some research on the period at the local library.

Others, however, may want to adapt the characters and settings into their own world, which causes a few more problems. Most fantasy campaigns are set in fictitious universes, and "Braveheart's" uniquely Scottish struggle may seem out of place therein. But with a little adjustment, the events and characters can be made to fit just about any campaign.

Braveheart takes place in the High Middle Ages, which is the same period as most fantasy RPG's. Technology and battle tactics are roughly the same, and the feudal system of government is practically identical. Tyrannical kings are hardly new, and all the characters need is some reason to fight against him. If that can be established, then Wallace and his compatriots are the natural choices for the leaders of the revolt.

The biggest difficulty is the sense of national character which pervades every facet of *Braveheart*. William Wallace is a Scotsman tried and true, and picturing him without a kilt or a thick brogue destroys the character beyond repair. A campaign with him in it needs to include at least the trappings of Scotland in order to achieve the right atmosphere.

GMs should keep this in mind when setting up their scenario, and give Wallace's nation - however fictitious it may be - the feeling of Edinburgh and the Highlands. No, this doesn't mean they have to play bagpipes and have clan tartans, but enough flavor should be there to give the players a healthy impression of the Northern British Isles.

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At last these slights against his Honor grew too great to bear, and Lord Hashimoto sent notice to Nagokita of his displeasure, warning that he would not tolerate futher transgressions against his fief. Several days passed, and at last a response was received from Nagoakita in the form of the severed head of Hashimoto's messenger.

Lord Hashimoto wasted no further time in deliberations, ordering his Fief mobilized for war. While his retainers organized the armies of House and Clan, Hashimoto retreated deep into the innermost sanctum of his Stronghold, where he spent many days in solitary meditation. At last, purified in mind, body and spirit, the great Dragon leader emerged from seclusion to lead his armies against the bastions of Lord Nagoakita and his honorless clansmen.

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The setting should be hilly and rainy, with low clouds hugging the mountain peaks. The characters should dress in earthy tones, and the men should wear kilts if possible. If you can effect a Scottish accent, that can go a long way towards establishing character. A few touches along those lines should be more than enough to convey the proper impression.

Hook, Line and Sinkers

The following adventure outlines are designed for characters other than Wallace and his men.

To the Aid of a Noble

Hook: The characters are at an inn or any suitable convenient location. They are approached by a page who states that "a gentleman of some renown" wishes to speak to them. There is a carriage outside waiting to transport them to a more private location.

Line: Arriving at a fortified castle, the characters are greeted by Robert the Bruce. Ushering them in, he explains that he wishes to use the characters to covertly aid Wallace, since he himself cannot. He has supplies and information he wishes them to send to him, and will provide them with any equipment they need.

Sinker: Robert's father, however, has gotten wind of the deal and takes steps to stop it. He informs Edward of the characters' location, and has the local magistrate dispatch a squad of assassins to stop them. The Englishmen may let the characters live if they turn over the supplies and information. Do they fight it out? Switch sides? Or let the troops take their supplies? If they do, they can still fulfill their mission by finding Wallace and giving him the information in person...

This scenario can also be run with Princess Isabelle as the noble in need of aid.

Prima Nocte

Hook: The characters are enjoying the wedding of a close friend in the local village. In the midst of the festivities, an English lord rides up with a company of men in tow. He has come to claim the right of Prima Nocte and plans to bed the bride this very night.

Line: The groom is incensed and wishes to fight, but the odds are stacked against them and the lord absconds with the bride. The groom wishes the characters to help him rescue his love before she can be ravished.

Sinker: If the characters agree, they must break into the local castle, locate the kidnapped bride and make their escape. Once they have done so, however, they will be wanted criminals, hunted for violating the nobleman's sacred rights. They must flee into the hills and perhaps join up with Wallace and his men if they wish to avoid arrest...

Further Research

The books listed below provide fairly solid information on Wallace and the time in which he lived:

- Barron, E.M. *The Scottish War of Independence.*

- Barrow, G.W.S. *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*

- Fergussen, James. *William Wallace, Guardian of Scotland.*

- Fisher, Andrew. *William Wallace.*

- Nicholson, Ranald. *Scotland: the Later Middle Ages.*

- Prestwich, Michael. *Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377.*

- Tout, T.F. *Edward the First.*

And, of course, the film itself is absolutely required viewing.

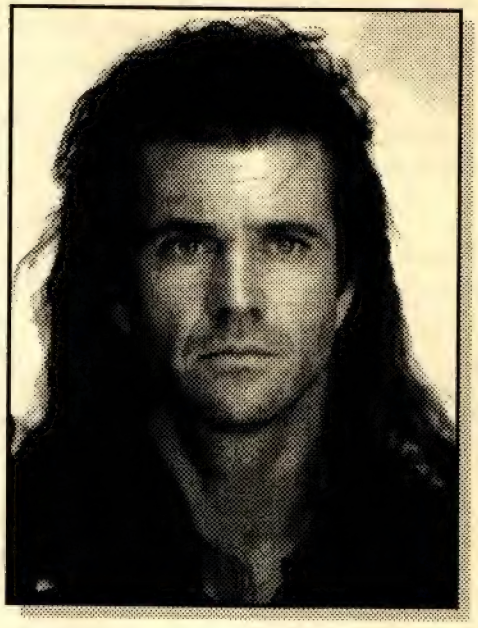
In the year of our Lord 1314, patriots of Scotland, starving and outnumbered, charged the fields of Bannockburn. They fought like warrior poets. They fought like Scotsmen. And won their freedom.

Forever. ❑

Characters

William Wallace

Scottish Revolutionary



Skills: Leadership, Military Tactics, Archery, Thrown Weapons, Melee Weapons, Public Speaking, Languages

Motivation: Freedom for his country

Weakness: Single-minded

William Wallace is a 13th century Scottish farmer whose father and older brother were killed by the English when he was very young. Raised by a stern uncle, he spent many years abroad before returning to Scotland and planning to settle down. He fell in love with and secretly married a childhood acquaintance, Murron, who was subsequently murdered by English troops. The act drove Wallace to join the burgeoning Scottish rebellion, a movement he has since embraced wholeheartedly and come to lead.

Wallace is very passionate about the cause he has allied himself to, and will accept nothing less than full Scottish independence. He disdains the back-room plotting espoused by Scotland's nobles, preferring strength of purpose and success on the battlefield to achieve what he desires. Money and titles are of no interest to Wallace, which has kept him from being bribed or corrupted away from the cause. Everything he is since the death of his wife is focused on the cause of Scottish freedom.

His natural charisma (which may have something to do with his uncanny resemblance to Mel Gibson) and uncompromising beliefs have made him one of the most

respected leaders in Scotland, and even the nobility is in awe of his achievements. Since joining the rebellion he has displayed an intuitive grasp of military tactics and strategy, resulting in numerous victories over better-armed and larger English forces.

Wallace is a clever and intelligent man who understands the necessities of planning before a battle. He is not above resorting to "dirty tricks" to defeat a more powerful foe. He speaks Latin, Italian and French fluently and claims to have taken a pilgrimage to Rome. Those who meet him are often taken aback by his eloquence, which contradicts the grubby exterior he presents.

Depending upon when and where you plan on setting your campaign, Wallace may or may not be dead. He was captured by the English and executed in 1305 for high treason, after which he became a martyr for the cause he devoted himself to. If you wish to start play after his death, he will be spoken of with almost holy reverence by the men who followed him. ❑

King Edward I (Longshanks)

King of England and generally crabby guy

Skills: Politicking, Military Strategy, Leadership

Motivation: To rule a powerful England

Weakness: Merciless

Edward the Longshanks has been described by his contemporaries as the most ruthless man ever to sit on the English throne. As most English Kings, he has designs on France, and arranged for the marriage of Princess Isabelle to his son in order to establish a legitimate claim upon the French throne. Next to these machinations, the rebellion in Scotland was originally little more than a thorn in his side. As time went on, however, Wallace and his compatriots became too large a problem to ignore: while away at France, his army suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Stirling and Wallace went on to capture the city of York. What began as a minor irritant had quickly become a legitimate irritant had quickly become a legitimate threat to his rule.

Longshanks is a cruel, scheming man who is not above sacrificing those beneath him to achieve his ends. He must maintain the image of a powerful, unified Britain to further his plans abroad. Wallace's rebellion is what has thus far presented the greatest threat to that image.

He typically entices the Scottish noblemen to his side with titles and land, but Wallace is a commoner who has refused any such bribes, which has forced him to reconsider his options. He reestablished the rule of Prima Nocte (First Night) in Scotland in an attempt to "breed" the independence out of them. Under Prima Nocte, the local lord has the right to bed a newly wedded bride on the night of her marriage, which would presumably lead to a bastard child. In addition to this, the Longshanks utilized more traditional means of "pacification" to secure Scotland, such as rape, pillage and murder.

He is horrifically disappointed in his effete son and bullies him whenever he can. when one of the prince's lovers deigned to speak to him as an equal, he threw the poor man out the nearest window. The prince hates his father with a passion but lacks the courage to stand up to Longshanks or his schemes ❑

Princess Isabelle

Princess of Wales

Skills: Diplomacy, Court Etiquette

Motivation: Helping Wallace and the people of Scotland

Weakness: Loves Wallace

Isabelle was married to Longshanks' son Prince Edward in order to solidify claims to France and provide the King with an heir. Since Prince Edward was homosexual and possibly impotent, it was rumored that the King himself had taken up some of the more... intimate husbandly duties.

Lonely and ignored by the prince her husband, Isabelle was entranced by the story of William Wallace and his lost love. She pressed the king to allow her negotiate with him for the return of York, and upon meeting him fell deeply in love. Her sympathy with Wallace's position and secret love for the man himself has led her to extend discreet aid to his cause.

Isabelle is well-educated, polite and has extensive knowledge of court-room intrigue. She understands the status of women in her time-period and has learned to work within its constraints to get what she desires. She has a great deal of benevolence for the people she will one day rule, and dedicates her resources to helping them in any way she can. ❑

Murron

Martyred Wife

Skills: Farming, Cooking, Herbology

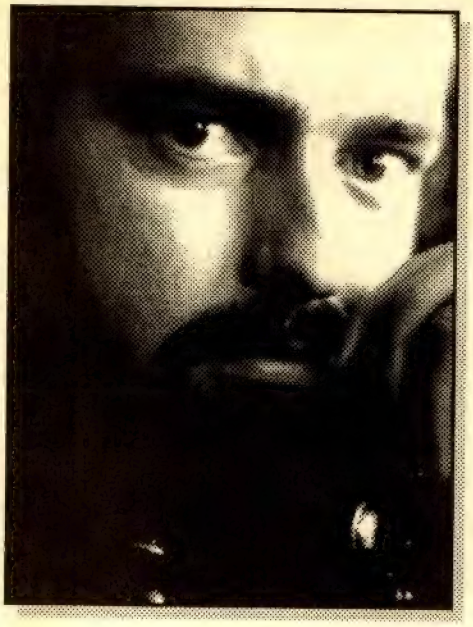
Motivation: To live in peace with Wallace

Weakness: Dead

Murron was the Scottish farmgirl whom Wallace loved from childhood. Upon his return from abroad, he secretly courted and married her, against her father's wishes.

Shortly after their marriage, a lecherous English soldier tried to rape her in her small village. She struggled with him briefly before being rescued by Wallace. The spurned guard called for others and the pair fled, but Murron was captured and publicly executed in an attempt to lure Wallace into the open. In vengeance, Wallace and a local resistance group massacred the entire brigade, thus beginning his long battle against the English crown.

Murron's primary purpose is simply a cherished memory to inspire Wallace in his battles. She appears to him several times in dreams, but beyond that, has little or no direct influence on the events in the film. Early participants in the Scottish revolt may have known her from early life or have witnessed her execution at the hands of the English. She is a victim of the cruelty and suffering that the Longshanks has inflicted upon Scotland - one of countless murdered during his reign. ❑



Robert the Bruce

Earl of Scotland (later king)

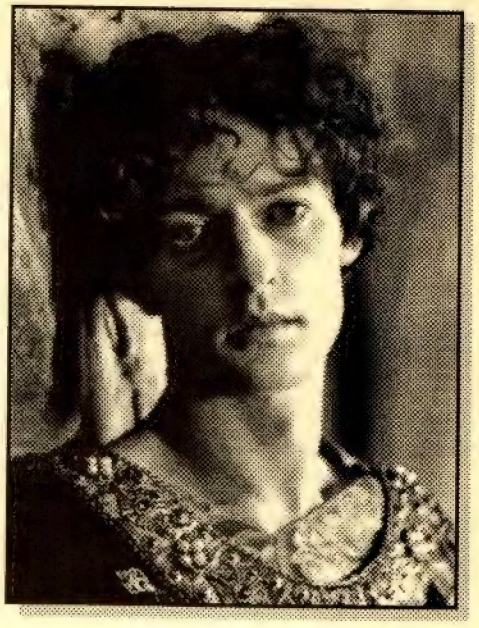
Skills: Politicking, Leadership, Horsemanship, HTH Combat

Weakness: Hampered by position

Robert the Bruce was inspired to revolt by the exploits of William Wallace, but was held back by his father and the constraints of his position. His desire to join the commoner knew no bounds, but the "higher duties" of the nobility prevented the clarity of purpose and uncompromising passion that

Robert's father, the senior Robert the Bruce, has been afflicted with leprosy and hides in a tower of Edinburgh castle. His son represents him to the outside world, claiming that the elder Bruce is traveling abroad. At the urgings of his father, Robert was led to betray Wallace at the battle of Falkirk, resulting in the destruction of the Scottish army and the near-death of Wallace. In exchange, he received the endorsement of the English crown and an inside track to the Scottish throne.

Robert's actions have left him a deeply remorseful and troubled man. He regrets his betrayal of Wallace with every bone in his body and has vowed "never to be on the wrong side again." After Wallace's execution, he will continue the Scottish rebellion in the name of the martyred commoner, and eventually rule a free Scotland as King Robert I. ❑



Prince Edward

Prince of Wales

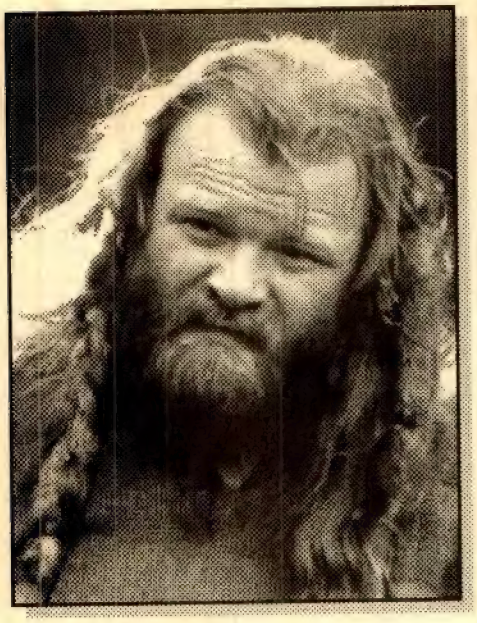
Skills: Court Etiquette, Archery

Motivation: To indulge in the privileges of rank unmolested

Weakness: Weak-willed

Prince Edward is the hapless and bullied son of the Longshanks. He married Isabelle at his father's behest, but obviously does not love her and spends most of his time among pages and "advisors." He was charged with quelling the Scottish rebellion while the King was in France, but botched the job terribly, and shortly before Longshanks' return, Wallace took York.

The Prince is spineless and weak, with neither the will or the competence to effectively rule. He is arrogant and shallow, and shows little interest in anything beside clothes and appearances. Isabelle will presumably be pulling the strings of the kingdom when his father dies, and his reign promises to be a short and brutal one. ❑



Hamish

Scottish Revolutionary

Skills: Strength, HTH Combat, Melee Combat

Motivation: To free Scotland

Weakness: Headstrong

Hamish is Wallace's childhood friend and right-hand man. Shortly after Wallace's return from abroad, the pair met again at a local wedding, and Hamish recieved a convincing lesson on his friend's tactical skill. That lesson remained with him in the dark years that followed.

He has fought the English alongside his father Campbell, and was among the first to rally to Wallace's side after Murron was killed. He stood by his friend through thick and thin, participating in the victory of Stirling and continuing the fight after Scotland's defeat at Falkirk. After Wallace's death, Hamish carried on in his name and wielded his friend's famous five-foot sword into battle.

Hamish is a huge bear of a man with tremendous strength and courage. He has fought the English alongside of his father for all of his adult life, and knows of little else. He tends to bull his way through situations, and lacks the knack for cleverness and foresight that Wallace possesses. ❑

Stephen

Irish Revolutionary

Skills: Contacts (Ireland), Stealth, Melee Combat

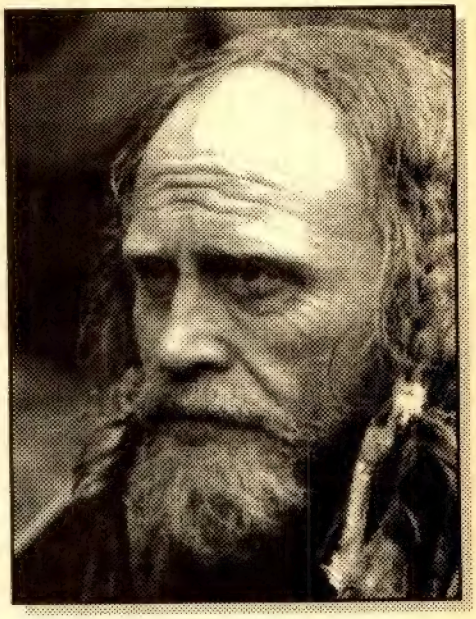
Motivation: To kill the English

Weakness: Possibly insane

Stephen is a wanted Irish criminal who joined Wallace's rebellion in order to "kill the English." After saving Wallace from an assassination attempt, he became a trusted friend and eventually one of Wallace's chief lieutenants.

Stephen may be more than a little touched in the head. He has personal conversations with God and often consults Him in the middle of conversations. In addition, he claims that Ireland belongs to him and believes that no danger can possibly emerge from "his" island. Nevertheless, his bravery is unquestioned and he was responsible for saving Wallace a second time at the Battle of Falkirk. Furthermore, he has enough contacts among the Irish to give at least superficial support to the claim that Ireland is "his."

His bearded face holds a wild-eyed stare and he often punctuates his remarks with a menacing cackle that others find decidedly unnerving. He is fierce enough to detract others from questioning his possible divine connection. ❑



Campbell

Senior Scottish Revolutionary

Skills: HTH Combat, Stamina

Motivation: Freedom for Scotland

Weakness: Old, Missing left hand

Campbell fought the English alongside William's father and brother, and brought the remains of the senior Wallaces back to their farm after they had been killed. He remained part of the Scottish resistance for the remainder of his life, and rallied his band to Wallace's aid when Murron was first killed. Along with his son and Stephen, he has served as one of the principal leaders of the Scottish rebellion.

Campbell is a tough, hard-bitten old man who has lived the life of a Scottish berserker. He has suffered multiple injuries in the course of his life, all of which he bears with an almost frightening amount of cheerfulness. He lost his left hand at the Battle of Stirling and has since done without. He always straps his shield to the handless arm before going into battle.

(Note: Campbell was killed during the Battle of Falkirk, so any campaign with him in it should be set before then.) ❑

Sources of RuneQuest III Cults for Glorantha

By Curtis Taylor © 1995 ❖ RQ Font by Oliver Jovanovic © 1993

CULT	RUNES	THEATER	SOURCE
Aldrya		Aldryami/The Grower	Elder Secrets
Annilla		tides/secret powers	Troll Gods
Aranea		spiders	Troll Gods
Argan Argar		troll merchants	Troll Gods
Arkat (troll aspect)		sorcery	Troll Gods
Bagog		chaos scorpion queen	Lords of Terror
Black Sun		anti-Yelm folk religion	Troll Gods
Bloody Tusk		tusk riders	Elder Secrets
Cacodemon		anarchy/murder/ogres	Elder Secrets
Caladra & Aurelion		volcanic fertility/harmony	TotRM #7
Chalana Arroy		healing & comfort	River of Cradles
Crimson Bat		crimson bat	TotRM #8
Daka Fal		ancestor worship	River of Cradles
Dendara		earth mother/Yelm wife	RQ Deluxe Edition
Donandar		music & dance	White Wolf #18
Dorasta		grain goddess	Dorastor: Land of Doom
Dormal		sailors & sailing	TotRM #10
Ernalda		earth mother	RQ Deluxe Edition
Gagarth		senseless violence	TotRM #4
Gorakiki		mother of insects	Troll Gods
Himile		cold and ice	Troll Gods
Humakt		death/war/anti-undead	TotRM #5
Hungry Ghosts		un-satiated spirits	TotRM #9
Issaries		communication/trade	River of Cradles
Krarsht		chaos god of intrigue	Lords of Terror
Krjalk		chaos god of apostasy	Lords of Terror
Kyger Litor		troll mother	Troll Gods or Trollpak
Lhankor Mhy		knowledge	River of Cradles
Lodril		volcanoes/male peasants	White Wolf #20
Magasta		Lord of the Sea	TotRM #10
Malia		chaos goddess of disease	Lords of Terror
Maran Gor		earthquake	TotRM #6
Mee Vorala		fungus/dark elves	Troll Gods
Moorgarki		jungle troll mother	Troll Gods
Mostal		Mostali/The Maker	Elder Secrets
Orlanth (Sartar)		King of the Gods/storm	Heroes Vol I, #4
Orlanth (Zola Fel)		King of the Gods/storm	River of Cradles
Pamalt		Earth-King of Pamaltela	TotRM #11
Pocharngo		chaos god of corruption	Lords of Terror
Primal Chaos		source of chaos	Lords of Terror
Storm Bull (Urox)		chaos killer/berserker	River of Cradles
Subere		first darkness	Troll Gods
Telmor		wolf hsunchen	Dorastor: Land of Doom
Thanatar (Carnarian)		head hunter/knowledge theft	Shadows on the Borderland
Thanatar (Dorastan)		head hunter/knowledge theft	Lords of Terror
Thed		mother of broos/rape	Lords of Terror
Uleria		love	Different Worlds #38
Xentha		night	Troll Gods
Xiola Umbar		protective darkness	Troll Gods
Yelm		sun/nobles	White Wolf #16
Yelmalio		sky/soldiers	Sun County
Zola Fel		Zola Fel River	River of Cradles
Zong		hunters (troll)	Troll Gods
Zorak Zoran		anti-chaos/anti-law/hate	Troll Gods

Since ***RuneQuest III***™ *came out in 1984, the long versions of the official cults for the fantasy world of Glorantha have been published in a myriad of sources. The chart lists all of the official cults and their sources. Addresses for magazines are given below. Non-magazine sources are* ***RuneQuest III*** *supplements available from* The Avalon Hill Game Company.

Magazines:

Tales of the Reaching Moon (TotRM)
David Gadbois
P. O. Box 49475
Austin, TX 78765

White Wolf Magazine
4598B Stonegate Industrial Boulevard
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-9918

Heroes (out of print)
The Avalon Hill Game Company
4517 Hartford Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21214

Different Worlds (out of print)
Chaosium Inc.
950-A 56th Street
Oakland, CA 94608-3129 ❑

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Stock Ships: The Missing Vessels

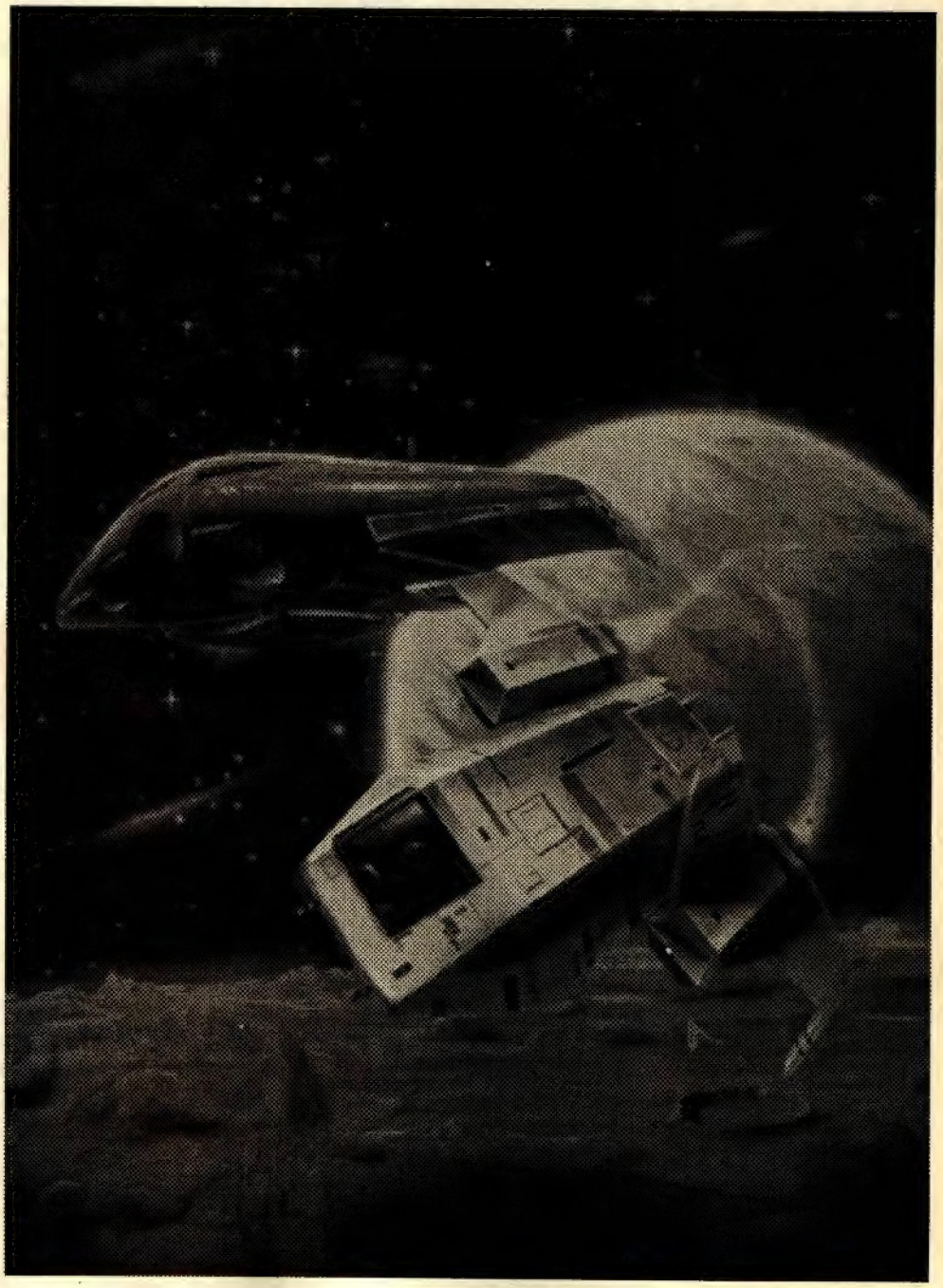
An Official Supplement for West End's Shatterzone™

By Dave Pilurs. All Material © 1995 West End Games

Shatterzone players, rejoice. West End is about to release a book which is absolutely essential to game play and will save you a lot of time. It's called **Stock Ships,** and it contains a plethora of new equipment, some new rules, and a host of ready-to-use vessel diagrams. It includes samples of most every imaginable ship type from in-system shuttle to Fleet dreadnought. It's a book for players and gamemasters alike. My interest in the book is keen, because I wrote and illustrated it. I think you'll like it even if you've never heard of Shatterzone. But wait, there's more!

Space is the final frontier, and the lack of it often spells death for some of the material that an author or illustrator produces for a product. That's what happened here. The editors ran out of space and had to make hard choices. Ultimately, they decided to cut some of the ships from the finished product. We all wish it were otherwise, but anyone who has written a product for publication understands that these things happen.

Fortunately, that additional material is not truly lost. The good people at *West End* and here at SHADIS Magazine all want you to have it. Therefore, what follows is an official supplement to the Shatterzone universe and a primer of what you can expect to find in the book **Stock Ships**. The ships were designed using the material presented in **Techbook: Ships and Stock Ships**. Read it, enjoy it, and use it in your games.



The Defender Battlecruiser

The Defender was introduced as the modern legacy of the old Standard class battlecruiser. Its armament is updated and its drives are improved, but the spirit of the

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*Starter Boxes have 60 standard size cards (5 rare, 19 uncommon, 36 common) and rule book, and Booster Packs have 14 standard size cards (1 rare, 5 uncommon, and 8 common), and 1 long, ultra-rare card.

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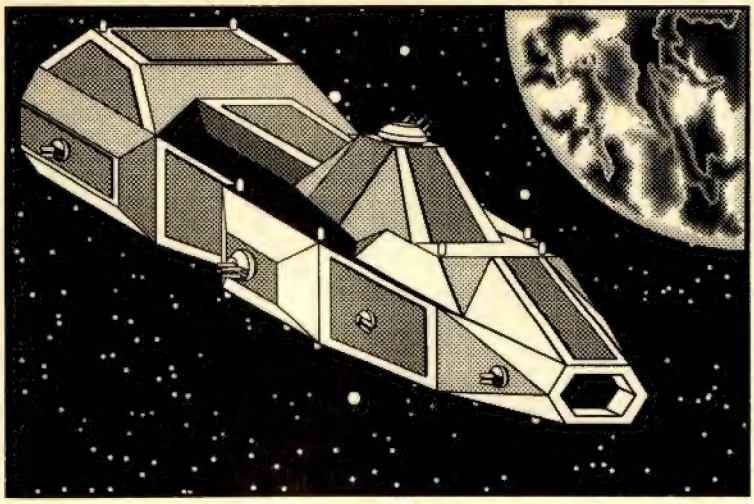


Defender Class Battlecruiser. © 1995 West End Games.

ship remains the same. In service for over 40 years, the Defender is hardly a new ship; but it's fairly large, extremely potent, and dedicated to the destruction of the Consortium's enemies.

The Defender is more than a carbon-copy of the ship it replaces. Where the Standard is outfitted with marines and fighters intended for a variety of operations, the Defender carries only fighters. These are capable of atmospheric operations, but their missile loads are restricted to AP and SD rounds. Clearly, the Defender is intended for space combat.

For this role, it's well-prepared. It possesses a 24-gun point defense system, six twin-missile turrets, two maxi-blaster quad-turrets, and two heavy mass driver quad turrets. Its drives can generate 7 PP per round, and its hangars stow 30 C/W Arrow fighters which it can launch in flights of six at one time.

The Arrows the Defender carries have been modified. Their ejectable cockpit pods have been replaced with life-supported cabins and Coldsleep tubes. The fighter fills the role of either the Dart or the Fenris, and this gives the Defender added flexibility in meeting its mission requirements. The battlecruiser carries just under 1,600 Brodie Starstrike missiles and 800 shots for its mass drivers. Its computers can provide 4,500 CPs and its reactors can produce 4,600 EPs.

Fleet often deploys the Defender in tandem with assault ships like the Aggressor. The assault ship lands marines on the surface while the battlecruiser provides cover from orbit.The ship is also deployed as a flagship for small strike groups operating in hostile space. Its escorts are usually Barracuda class destroyers, though it's occasionally deployed with light cruisers or privateers. In some missions, the Defender deploys its fighters, Q-Syncs them, and jumps into Q-space. The group emerges in the target area as a fleet of 31 ships, ready to fight.

The Admiralty is delighted with the Defender's performance. It specified the desire for a ship to resemble the Standard as much as possible while providing enhanced performance at an equivalent cost, and the Defender has exceeded their lofty expectations. With 610 hulls now in service and 100 more on order, the vessel will project the image of Fleet hegemony in the Near Colonies for years to come.

Total Tonnage: 18,854 tons
Available Tonnage: 3,046 tons
Mass Value: 38
Cost: 70,655,000 Cr
Stealth: 1 (+3 vs Radar)
Crew: 200; 5 for 4 yrs, 195 for 2 yrs.
Maintenance Cost: 36,300 every 6 mos.

Cargo Capacity

Open Bays: 150 tons allocated for cargo storage.

Ammo Bays: 936 tons allocated to store missiles. 240 tons allocated to store mass driver reloads.

Segmented Bays: 18 tons allocated for computer bays. 60 tons allocated for drive bays. 100 tons allocated for equipment bays. 192 tons allocated for reactor bays. 27 tons allocated for sensor bays. 20 tons allocated for weapon bays.

Pod Bays: 200 tons allocated for escape pods.

Ship Bays: 3,000 tons allocated as fighter hangars. 600 tons allocated as launch bays.

Sensors

Diagnostics: (357 units)

Visual Scanners: (357 units)

Passive: Scanners (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

Radar, Type B (0-2/6/10/20/40): Scanners front, back, left,right, up, down

Radar, Type C (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

Visual (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right,up, down

Weapons

Maxi-Blaster (1-10/15/20/35; dam: 44): 8 mounted in 2 quad turrets. Turret 1 mounted top, covers front, back, left, right, up. Turret 2 mounted bottom, covers front, back, left, right, bottom.

External Damage Chart

1-2	Shield Blinds
3-4	Reaction Drive
1-6	Main
7-10	Auxiliary
5-6	Shields
7	Weapons
1-3	Maxi-Blaster Turret (1-2)
4-5	Scatter Laser Battery (1-6)
6-8	Heavy Mass Driver Turret(1-2)
9-10	Missile Launcher Turret(1-6)
8	Maneuver Rating
9	Sensors
1-2	Passive Scanners (1-6)
3-5	Radar, Type B (1-6)
6-8	Radar, Type C (1-6)
9-10	Visual
10	Airlock

Scatter Laser (1; dam: 34): 24; 4 mounted front, 4 mounted back, 4 mounted left, 4 mounted right, 4 mounted up, 4 mounted down.

Heavy Mass Driver (3-20/40/70/100; dam: 48): 8 mounted in two quad turrets. Turret 1 mounted left; covers front, back, left, up, down. Turret 2 mounted right; covers front, back, right, up, down.

Missile Launcher (5-25/50/100/200): 12 mounted in 6 twin turrets. Turret 1 mounted front left; covers front, left, up, down. Turret 2 mounted front right; covers front, right, up, down. Turret 3 mounted middle left; covers front, back, left, up, down. Turret 4 mounted middle right; covers front, back, right, up, down. Turret 5 mounted rear left; covers back, left, up, down. Turret 6 mounted rear right; covers back, right, up, down.

Starstrike AP: 34 Starstrike HE: 35 Starstrike SD: 32

Hull Toughness: 35

Max Wounds: 12

Facings: 11

Armor: +7/42

Armor Points: 77

Shields: SER +7/49

Shield Configuration Points: 77

Reaction Drive: Main: Value 42; Aux: Value 37

Propulsion Points: Main: 7PP Aux: 2 PP

Maneuver Rating: -7

Quantum Drive Rating: 38 (Main and Backup installed)

Energy Plant: 23 Value 13 Fusion Units

Total Energy Points: 3,400 w/17 plants operating @ 50%

Efficiency

Energy Point Breakdown: *Life support: 581 *Cargo Life Support: 726 *Cargo: 259 Maxi-Blaster Turret(2): 108(216) Scatter Lasers (24): 12(288) Heavy Mass Driver Turret(2): 16(32) Missile Launcher turrets(12): 4(48) *Shields: 33 *Diagnostics: 357 Internal Visuals: 357 *Passive Sensors(6): 2 ea.(12) *Radar B Units(6): 3 (18) *Radar C Units(6): 5(30) *Visual Sensor: 5 Boarding Tubes(2): 5(10) Comm Scramblers(6): 10(60) *Main Reaction Drive: 152 Auxiliary Reaction Drive: 24 Q-Drive: 140 *Computers: 24

Vital Energy Points: 2,197

Available Energy Points: 1,203

Energy Points Required to Power All Systems: 3,208 Reserve Energy Generation Capability: 192 from online reactors; 1,200 from 6 reserve reactors.

Computer Point Value: 4,500 CPs available from 3 Value 16 computers.

Computer Point Breakdown: *Life Support: 581 *Cargo Life Support: 726 *Cargo: 259 Maxi-Blaster Turret(2): 9(18) Scatter Laser batteries (6): 4(24) Heavy Mass Driver Turret (2): 10(20) Missile Launcher Turrets (6): 7 ea.(42) *Shields: 33 *Diagnostics: 357 Internal Visuals: 357 *Passive Sensors(6): 2 ea(12) *Radar B Units(6): 2(12) *Radar C Units(6): 3(18) VisualSensor: 10 Boarding Tubes(2): 3(6) Comm Scramblers(6): 10 ea. (60) Point Defense System(24 guns): 24 Q-Sync Disrupter: 8 Q-Syncer: 3 T-Sync Disrupter: 8 T-Syncer: 3 *Main Reaction Drive: 152 Auxiliary Reaction Drive: 24 Q-Drive: 79 *Energy Plants (17 online): 26(442) AutoScan 14: 12 *Gee Comp 7: 7 Navigation, Q-Drive: 5 Point Defense 14(2): 15(30) Probe, Simple (+3): 5 Probe, Advanced (+3): 8 Probe, Ship-to-Ship: 12 React 13: 6 Q-Sync: 1/shp Seeker +4(12): 5(60) Sync-Jacker: 5 Targeting +6(10): 3(30) T-Sync: 1/shp

Vital Computer Points: 2,566

Available Computer Points: 1,934

Computer Points Required to Drive All Systems: 3,323

Reserve Computer Points: 1,177

Notes:

Six Ammo Bays contain 120 Starstrike AP, 120 Starstrike HE and 120 Starstrike SD as reloads for missile launcher turrets; twenty more bays contain 600 Starstrike AP and 600 Starstrike SD missiles as fighter reloads; and they contain 400 Heavy Mass Driver reloads for the mass driver turrets. Each launcher gets 10 of each type of missile and each mass driver may fire 100 shots.

Equipment Bays contain 2 5-man Boarding Tubes. Equip Lockers contain 200 ENVI suits, 20 EVMS units, and 60 Mag Clamps.

Five Hangar Bays house 30 C/W Arrow fighters. Hull coated with Fleet Grey chromatic stealth paint. Six Launch Bays capable of launching/landing 6 fighters at one time.Pod Bays contain 40 EV5 Escape Pods. Weapon Lockers contain 200 Brodie LX4 Military Blaster Rifles and 400 extra magazines.

Ship carries 6 Comm Scramblers, 2 Distress Beacons, 2 ECM Pods, 2 IFF Transponders, a Q-Syncer, a T-Syncer, a

Internal Damage Chart

2-4	**Hull Toughness**
5-9	**Cargo Holds**
1-2	Ammo Bays
	1-3: Mass Driver Reloads
	4-6: Missile Launcher reloads (1-6)
	7-10: Fighter Missile reloads (1-20)
3	Bulk Space
4	Equipment Bays
5	Equipment Lockers
6-7	Hangar Bays (1-5)
8	Launch Bays (1-6)
9	Escape Pod Bays
10	Weapon Lockers
10	**Crew**
11	**Passengers**
12-13	**Internal Sensors**
1-4	Diagnostics
6-10	Visual Scanners
14	**Computer (1-3)**
1-4	Active
5-10	Storage
15-16	**Power Plant**
1-7	Online
8-10	Reserve
17	**Life Support**
18	**Quantum Drive(1-2)**
19	**Coldsleep modules**
20	**Accessories**
1	Comm Scramblers(1-6)
2-3	Distress Beacon
4	ECM Pods (1-2)
5	IFF Transponder (2)
6	Q-Jacker
7	Q-Sync Disrupter
8	Q-Syncer
9	T-Sync Disrupter
10	T-SyncerStock Ships Vessel Diagram

Q-Sync Disrupter, a T-Sync Disrupter, and a set of Shield Blinds.

Ship equipped with two 20-man and one 10-man Airlocks, 100 main and auxiliary bridge stations, 20 gunner stations, a 40-bed Infirmary, 50-man Deluxe Lounge, 200 Coldsleep modules, 5 Alert Crew Quarters, 55 1-Man Rooms, 70 2-Man Rooms, 10 VIP Quarters, a 20-prisoner Brig, and a 20-man Repair Shop.

Lockheed-Mikoyan's Guardian Class Patrol Craft

The Guardian was apparently conceived in direct response to competitor Northrop-Prime's introduction of the Dictator, but it's more than a direct copy. On the surface, the two ships may seem quite similar, but they're remarkably different. Where the Dictator is equipped for the pursuit and capture of pirates, the Guardian's first mission is system defense. Where the Dictator is built to its maximum capacity, the Guardian has an enormous reserve capacity in its computers, power plants, and hull. It's almost as if the Guardian was designed in anticipation of a war to be waged with 600-ton battleships.

In fact, L-M's CEO petitioned the Admiralty for and received authorization to specify nuclear-tipped Q-missiles on the Guardian's build sheet. L-M also equipped the ship with a SkipJump Drive. The politics behind this particular equipment package and Fleet's acquisition of the ship are unclear. A 600-ton ship armed with nuclear Q-missiles could annihilate Fleet dreadnoughts from 100 SUs away and escape without ever registering on a scanner. Obviously, Fleet would never let L-M sell this ship to anyone but Fleet, but that's not the whole story.

No one in Fleet would ever discuss it publicly, but it's pretty well known that the most hostile fringers use fission reactors to make nuclear warheads. It's less known that quite a few HE-warheaded Slayers are missing from NetWorld's inventory. Knowing that, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the very subversives Fleet wishes to keep the Guardian away from already have nuclear Q-missiles. All they need is a means for delivery. Is there any doubt that they could steal a Guardian-class ship and arm it themselves? Is there any doubt they couldn't copy or steal the technology and arm their Scythes with nukes? Would a ship like the Guardian (or any ship) be effective in stopping nuclear-armed terrorists should they decide to hold a planet for ransom or simply attack Fleet ships on the Frontier?

Time will tell, but this much is certain: The Guardian is destined for duty in the Consortium's roughest sectors. It will serve as a system defense ship for colony worlds and strategic outposts plagued by pirates and bolters. It will serve in systems too remote to merit expensive battlecruisers, systems where a fleet of small, high-powered ships would have more impact than a battlecruiser.

Deployment of the Guardian marks a fundamental change in Fleet thinking - away from the ever-larger, ever-more-advanced carriers and dreadnoughts. It also turns the Guardian into a flagship of sorts for a new breed of warships. These are smaller and, ton for ton, far more destructive than anything else serving in Fleet today. Any space-faring adventurer would love to acquire one of these, but these are vessels of war, not commerce.

Total Tonnage: 564

Available Tonnage: 86

Mass Value: 29

Cost: 3,342,000 Cr (L-M product)

Stealth: 10 (+3 vs. Radar)

Crew: 5 + 3 Security Troops.

Maintenance Cost: 3,000 Cr every 12 mos.

Cargo Capacity

Ammo Bays: 18 tons allocated to store missiles

Segmented Bays: 8 tons allocated for computer bays. 22 tons allocated for drive bays. 5 tons allocated for equipment bays. 5 tons allocated for equipment lockers. 15 tons allocated for reactor bays. 10 tons allocated for sensor bays. 20 tons allocated for weapon bays. 1 ton allocated for weapon lockers.

Sensors

Diagnostics: (8 units)

Visual Scanners: (8 units)

Passive: Scanner (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanner front

Radar, Type B (0-2/6/10/20/40): Scanners back, left, right, up, down

Radar, Type C (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front

Visual (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

Weapons

Assault Laser (1-15/25/35/45; dam: 41): 6 mounted in 2 triple turrets. Turret 1 mounted left; covers front, back, left, up, down. Turret 2 mounted right; covers front, back, right, up, down

Missile Launcher (5-25/50/100/200): 2 mounted front

Slayer HE: 40 Slayer NUC: 41

Hull Toughness: 27

Max Wounds: 10

Facings: 7

Armor: +10/37

Armor Points: 70

Shields: DIF +5/42

Shield Configuration Points: 35

Reaction Drive: Value 34;Boosters: 6 units

Propulsion Points: 7 PP; +3/10 PP w/boosters

Maneuver Rating: 3; +1/4 w/M/R software; -1/ Booster in use

Quantum Drive Rating: 30

SkipJump Drive Rating: 10

Energy Plant: 2 Value 13 Fusion Reactors

Total Energy Points: 400 w/1 Reactor running @ 100% Efficiency.

Energy Point Breakdown: *Life support: 26 *Cargo Life Support: 4 *Cargo: 10 Assault Laser Turret(2): 81(162) Missile

External Damage Chart

1-2		Shield Blinds
3-4		Reaction Drive
5		Boosters
6		Shields
7		Weapons
	1-8	Assault Laser Turret (1-2)
	9-10	Missile Launcher (1-2)
8		Maneuver Rating
9		Sensors
	1	Passive Scanners
	2-7	Radar, Type B
	8	Radar, Type C
	9-10	Visual
10		Airlock

Launchers(2): 1(2) *Shields: 35 *Diagnostics: 8 Internal Visuals: 8 *Passive Sensors: 2 *Radar B Units(5): 3(15) *Radar C Unit: 5 *Visual Sensor: 5 Boarding Tube: 5 Comm Scramblers(2): 10(20) *Reaction Drive: 48 Boosters(3): 5(15) Q-Drive: 50 Skipjump Drive: 100 *Computers: 12

Vital Energy Points: 170

Available Energy Points: 230

Energy Points Required to Power All Systems: 376

Reserve Energy Generation Capability: 24 EPs + 400 from Aux Reactor.

Computer Point Value: 500 from 2 Value 12 Computers.

Computer Point Breakdown: *Life Support: 26 *Cargo Life Support: 4 *Cargo: 10 Assault Laser Turret(2): 8(16) Missile Launcher(2): 3(6) *Shields: 14 *Diagnostics: 8 Internal Visuals: 8 *Passive Sensor: 2 *Radar B Units(5): 2(10) *Radar C Unit: 3 *Visual Sensor: 10 Boarding Tubes: 3 Comm Scramblers(2): 10(20) T-Sync Disrupter: 8 T-Syncer: 3 *Reaction Drive: 48 Q-Drive: 21 SkipJump Drive: 42 *Energy Plant: 26 AutoGunner 14(3): 8(24) AutoPilot 14: 18 AutoScan 14: 12 *Gee Comp 10: 10 Mnvr/Rx +1: 4 Navigation, Learn: 3 Navigation, Q-Drive:5 Probe, Ship-to-Ship: 12 React 13: 6 Seeker +4: 5 Shield Boost +4: 8 Shunt 16: 8 Targeting +6(3): 3(9) T-Sync: 1/shp

Vital Computer Points: 171

Available Computer Points: 329

Computer Points Required to Drive All Systems: 347 + 1/shp

Reserve Computer Points: 150 CPs

Notes:

Ammo Bays contain 5 Slayer HE missiles for Launcher 1 and 5 Slayer NUC missiles for launcher 2.

Ship's computers contain 2 complete sets of the software shown above.

Equipment Bays contain a 5-man Boarding Tube and 2 EVMS Units

Equipment Lockers contain 3 Mark IV Brodie armor suits, 5 ENVI suits, and 5 Mag Clamp sets

Hull coated with polychromatic stealth paint (+3 stealth vs.radar). Hull is streamlined Sloped (+3 Stealth) and equipped with wings for transatmospheric operations.

Weapon Lockers contain 3 Brodie LX4 Military Blaster Rifles, 5 Furtherman F20 Military Laser Rifles, 9 Brodie magazines, and 20 Furtherman magazines.

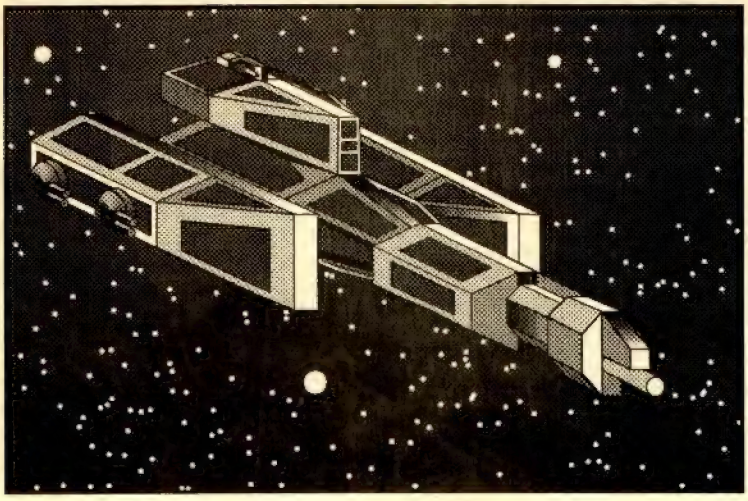
Ship carries 2 Comm Scramblers, 10 Decoy Pods, 2 Distress Beacons, 2 IFF Transponders, Shield Blinds (cancels +3 Bonus on Scan vs. Shields), a T-Sync Disrupter, and a T-Syncer.

Ship equipped with a 5-man Airlock, a 3-man Bridge, 2 gunner stations, an 8-man

Internal Damage Chart

2-4	**Hull Toughness**
5-7	**Cargo Holds**
1-3	Missile Launcher Ammo Bays(1-2)
4-5	Equipment Bays
6-7	Equipment Lockers
8-9	Segmented Cargo Bay
10	Weapon Lockers
8-9	**Crew**
10-11	**Security Troops**
12	**Internal Sensors**
1-4	Diagnostics
5-10	Visual Scanners
13-14	**Computer (Active/Storage)**
15	**Power Plant (1-2)**
16	**Life Support**
17	**Quantum Drive**
18	**SkipJump Drive**
19	**Coldsleep modules**
20	**Accessories**
1-2	Comm Scramblers
3-4	Decoy Pods
5	Distress Beacon
6	IFF Transponder
7-8	T-Sync Disrupter
9-10	T-SyncerStock Ships Vessel Diagram

Guardian Class Patrol Ships. © 1995 West End Games.



Barracuda Class Destroyer. © 1995 West End Games

Deluxe Lounge, 8 Coldsleep modules, eight 1-Man Rooms, and a 4-prisoner Brig.

Barracuda Class Destroyer

The Barracuda is the current standard Fleet destroyer armed with nuclear weapons and equipped with boosted Serenium shields. Before the reintroduction of nuclear warheads in the Fleet inventory and before the invention of shield boosters, the Barracuda was designed and intended as a dedicated convoy escort and fleet defense ship. It filled both these roles with great efficiency, but at some point its importance grew. With nothing more than the addition of nuclear missiles and shield boosters, the erstwhile escort ship became a small-but-powerful capital ship in its own right.

With as many as 8,000 hulls in service and ripe for refit, the Barracuda became a hip-pocket enforcer of Fleet policy. With a delivered cost less than 10 million credits, the Barracuda will remain one of the most dominant Fleet warships ever constructed for decades to come. As it is, wherever a major Fleet action is underway, Barracudas ride the strike group's flanks and support the fighters with nuclear firepower. Eventually, anyone visiting any system with a dedicated Fleet presence will find at least one Barracuda-class ship orbiting overhead or on maneuvers nearby.

The only feature most Barracudas lack is SkipJump drive, but this will change in the next 10 years. As Fleet turns its greatest emphasis from the Near Colonies and Inner Frontier to the Shatterzone and Outer Frontier, it will need a rough-and-ready ship to support its carriers and dreadnoughts. For this, the Barracuda is an ideal choice.

The only thing preventing the Admiralty from simply scheduling every Barracuda in the inventory for SkipJump drive installation is the cost. A SkipJump drive still costs 6 times as much as a standard Q-Drive. When the price falls (as it must), the installation will begin. Until then, the Barracuda stays on the Consortium side of the 'Zone.

Fleet regards this ship as military hardware, especially when armed with nuclear weapons. That hasn't stopped privateers from snapping up surplus hulls and refitting them for their own use. It hasn't stopped planetary governments from purchasing the ships from the Consortium, either. The ship exists in a shocking array of versions and variants. Most of them remain tough enough to travel anywhere on the Consortium side of the 'Zone, and some of them could vie for the honor of being, ton-for-ton, the most vicious ship ever constructed.

Many small-time privateer captains lay awake when they should be sleeping, imagining the big score that will let them buy into this part of the space traveler's dream. But for most of them, the possibility of owning this ship is only a dream. The vessel is a valuable commodity, and fetches top credits even in the aftermarket. Of course, for those with connections, nothing is impossible. Operational Barracuda hulls have had their ownership transferred from one owner to the next for as little as 50% of their cost new, but you can bet that those ships are few and far between.

Total Tonnage: 2,678 tons

Available Tonnage: 170 tons

Mass Value: 33

Cost: 8,203,000 Cr

Stealth: 4 (+3 vs Radar)

Crew: 36 + 4 Passengers for 6 months + Coldsleep

Maintenance Cost: 5,250 Cr every 6 mos.

Cargo Capacity

Ammo Bays: 72 tons allocated to store missiles. 48 tons allocated to store mass driver reloads. 36 tons allocated to extra blaster cannon barrels.

Segmented Bays: 12 tons allocated for computer bays. 42 tons allocated for drive bays. 18 tons allocated for equipment bays. 36 tons allocated for equipment lockers. 30 tons allocated for reactor bays. 30 tons allocated for segmented cargo bays (Oxyfor 15). 18 tons allocated for sensor bays. 60 tons allocated for weapon bays. 4 tons allocated for weapon lockers.

Pod Bays: 40 tons allocated for escape pods.

Sensors

Diagnostics: (26 units)

Visual Scanners: (26 units)

Passive: Scanners (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

Radar, Type C (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

External Damage Chart

1-2	Reaction Drive
3	Shields
4-6	Weapons
1-3	Gatling Blaster Turrets (1-4)
4-5	Mass Driver Turrets (1-2)
6-10	Missile Launchers
7	Maneuver Rating
8-9	Sensors
1-3	Passive Scanners
4-8	Radar, Type C
9-10	Visual
10	Airlock

Visual (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanners front, back, left, right, up, down

Weapons

Gatling Blaster 7 (1-5/8/10/20; dam: 45): 8 mounted in 4 twin turrets. 1 turrets mounted left; cover front, back, left, up, down. 2 turrets mounted right; cover front, back, right, up, down.

Mass Driver (3-10/20/30/75; dam: 39): 4 mounted in 2 twin turrets. 1 turret mounted top; covers front, back, left, right, up. 1 turret mounted bottom; covers front, back, left, right, up.

Missile Launcher (5-25/50/100/200): 6 Launchers; 3 mounted left, 3 mounted right.

Internal Damage Chart

2-4	Hull Toughness
5-8	Cargo Holds
1-4	Ammo Bays
	1-2: Stiletto HE Missiles
	3-7: Stiletto NUC Missiles
	8-9: Mass Driver Reloads
	10: Gatling Blaster Replacement Barrels
5	Equipment Bays
6	Equipment Lockers
7-8	Escape Pods
9	Segmented Cargo Bay
10	Weapon Lockers
9	Crew
10	Passengers
11	Internal Sensors (Diagnostics/Visual Scanners)
12	Computer (Active/Storage)
13	Power Plant
14	Life Support
15-16	Quantum Drive (1-2)
17-19	Coldsleep modules
20	Accessories
1-2	Comm Scramblers (1-2)
3-4	Decoy Pods
5	Distress Beacon (1-2)
6	IFF Transponder (1-2)
7	Q-Sync Disrupter (1-2)
8	Q-Syncer (1-2)
9	T-Sync Disrupter (1-2)
10	T-Syncer (1-2)

Stiletto HE: 36

Stiletto NUC: 36

Missile Launcher (5-25/50/100/200): 18 launchers; 4 mounted front, 4 mounted back, 1 mounted left, 1 mounted right, 4 mounted top and 4 mounted bottom.

Hull Toughness: 30

Max Wounds: 11

Facings: 9

Armor: +11/41

Armor Points: 99

Shields: SER +7/48; w/Boosters: +3/51

Shield Configuration Points: 63; w/Boosters: +27/90

Reaction Drive: Value 38

Propulsion Points: 7 PP

Maneuver Rating: -3

Quantum Drive Rating: 34

Energy Plant: 4 Value 13 Fusion Reactors

Total Energy Points: 720 w/2 reactors running @ 90% efficiency

Energy Point Breakdown: *Life support: 99 *Cargo Life Support: 8 *Cargo: 42 Gatling Blaster Turrets (4): 72(288) Mass Driver Turret(2): 3(6) Missile Launchers(24): 1(24) *Shields: 27 Shield Boosters: 45 *Diagnostics: 26 Internal Visuals: 26 *Passive Sensors(6): 2(12) *Radar C Units(6): 5(30) *Visual Sensor: 5 Boarding Tubes(2): 5(10) Comm Scramblers(2): 10(20) *Reaction Drive: 72 Q-Drive: 90 *Computers: 12

Vital Energy Points: 333

Available Energy Points: 387

Energy Points Required to Power All Systems: 731

Reserve Energy Generation Capability: 720 EPs from 2 reserve reactors

Computer System: 3 CPV 13 computers

Computer Point Value: 800 CPs w/2 computers online

Computer Point Breakdown: *Life support: 99 *Cargo Life Support: 8 *Cargo: 42 Gatling Blaster Turrets (4): 7(28) Mass Driver Turret(2): 6(12) Missile Launchers(24): 5(120) *Shields: 27 *Diagnostics: 26 Internal Visuals: 26 *Passive Sensors(6): 2(12) *Radar C Units(6): 3(18) *Visual Sensor: 10 Boarding Tubes(2): 3(6) Comm Scramblers(2): 10(20) Q-Sync Disrupter: 8 Q-Syncer: 3 T-Sync Disrupter: 8 T-Syncer: 3 VR Goggles(20): 1(20) *Reaction Drive: 72 Q-Drive: 47 *Energy Plants: 52 AutoScan 12: 10 EP Coordination +3: 7 *Gee Comp 7: 7 Navigation, Q-Drive: 5 Probe, Ship-to-Ship: 12 React 13: 6 Q-Sync: 1/shp Seeker +4(24): 5(120) Shield Boost +3: 7 Shunt 15: 7 Targeting +5(12): 3(36) T-Sync: 1/shp

Vital Computer Points: 373

Available Computer Points: 427

Computer Points Required to Drive All Systems: 808

Reserve Computer Points: 400 from 1 reserve computer.

Notes:

Ammo Bays contain 5 missiles for each missile launcher. Ammo Bays contain 80 Mass Driver Reloads (100 shots/gun). Ammo Bays contain 56 extra blaster cannon magazines for Gatling Blasters.

Ship's computers contain 2 complete sets of the software shown above.

Ship equipped with 2 Q-Drive units, extra Serenium, and Type 3 Shield Boosters.

Equipment Bays contain two 5-man Boarding Tubes and 6 EVMS Units. Equipment Lockers contain 40 ENVI suits and 36 Mag Clamp sets.

Hull coated with chromatic stealth paint (+3 stealth vs. radar). Pod Bays contain 8 EV5 Escape Pods.

Weapon Lockers contain 36 Furtherman F20 Military Laser Rifles and 144 extra magazines.

Ship carries 2 Comm Scramblers, 20 Decoy Pods, 2 Distress Beacons, 2 IFF Transponders, 2 Q-Sync Disrupters, 2 Q-Syncers, Shield Blinds (cancels +3 Bonus on Scan vs. Shields), 2 T-Sync Disrupters, 2 T-Syncers, and 20 sets of VR Goggles.

Ship equipped with two 5-man Airlocks, a 4-man Bridge, 16 gunner stations, an 8-bed Infirmary, a 20-man Deluxe Lounge, a 10-man Basic Lounge, 40 Coldsleep modules, 6 Alert Crew Quarters, ten 1-man Rooms, ten 2-man Rooms, 4 VIP Quarters, an 8-prisoner Brig, and a 5-man Repair Shop.

Kereteka's Explorer Class Scout

Kereteka wanted to build an entry into the burgeoning scout market, and the

Explorer was the result of their effort. The Explorer is a simple, one-man scout ship equipped with six Harvestman spiders. It's designed for lone scouts conducting planetary surveys out on the frontier. Equipped with energy-, passive- and radar- sensors, the craft is well-suited to its task. It also boasts one of the best all-around software suites ever installed on a craft under 1,000 tons.

The ship has an uncommonly powerful computer. With the Autopilot, Autogunner, AutoScan, and React routines all running, the pilot can spend the entire trip in Coldsleep and wake up to land the ship planetside. This is uncommon, though. Normally, the pilot engages the Q-Drive, goes to sleep, and wakes up just before the ship emerges from Q-Space. He wouldn't need to use Coldsleep at all, except that the Explorer is intended for jumps in excess of 4 weeks, and that's the way that Fleet and most of the megacorps that buy the ship want it used.

In addition to the pilot, the ship can carry up to 4 passengers. They're expected to spend the bulk of their trip in Coldsleep, though the ship does have a deluxe lounge area where everyone can sit and wake up in relative comfort. Like most ships of this size, the Explorer has no escape pods. It does have a distress beacon and ENVI suits, but considering the distances involved, it's unlikely anyone would hear the distress call if something did happen to the ship. For that reason, the ship carries an EVMS unit, and most scouts fill their equipment bays with spare parts.

The Explorer is purpose-built. It never really gained acceptance with the Fleet Scout Service, but Randall-Hollings uses them almost exclusively. It's also popular with several other mining conglomerates. Not many of these have reached the aftermarket. A few get captured by better-equipped pirates, but most either end up retired as scrap or lost in space, casualties of their dangerous industry. Still, the ship is well-built and desirable for lone mercenaries and Xenos making their lives among the shatrats, fringers, and bolters on the Frontier. If they can find one used, it's also the sort of ship which would suit the needs of adventurers, bounty hunters, and mercenaries.

Total Tonnage: 157

Available Tonnage: 25

Mass Value: 27

Cost: 640,000

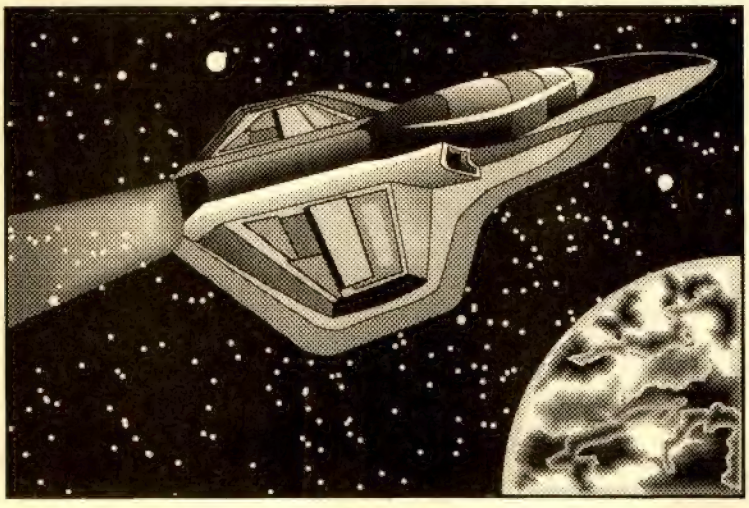
Stealth: 11

Crew: 1 for 12 mos + 4 passengers in Coldsleep.

Maintenance Cost: 1,300 Cr/12 mos.

Cargo Capacity

Segmented Bays: 3 tons allocated for computer bays. 5 tons allocated for drive bays. 3 tons allocated for equipment bays. 3 tons allocated for equipment lockers. 5 tons allocated for reactor bays. 3 tons allocated for segmented cargo bays. 6 tons allocated for sensor bays. 6 tons allocated for weapon bays. 1 ton allocated for weapon lockers.



Explorer Class Scout Ship. © 1995 West End Games

Internal Damage Chart	
2-4	Hull Toughness
5-8	Cargo Holds
1	Equipment Bay
2-3	Equipment Locker
4	Probe Pod Bay
5-8	Vehicle Bays
	1-4: Harvestman Spiders (1-6)
	5-10: Kereteka Spider Prospector
9-10	Segmented Cargo Bay
9	Pilot
10	Passengers
11	Diagnostics
12	Computer (Active/Storage)
13-15	Power Plant
16	Life Support
17-18	Quantum Drive
18-19	Coldsleep modules
20	Accessories
1-8	Decoy Pods
9-10	Distress Beacon

Pod Bays: 5 tons allocated for probe pods.

Vehicle Bays: 5 tons allocated to store vehicles. 5 tons allocated to store spiders.

Sensors

Diagnostics: (1 units)

Energy Sensors (1/2/3/4/5) : Scanner front

Passive Scanners (0-3/10/20/40/100): Scanner front

External Damage Chart	
1-3	Reaction Drive
4-5	Shields
6	CF Laser Battery
7	Missile Launcher (1-2)
8	Maneuver Rating
9	Sensors
1-2	Energy Sensor
3-4	Passive Scanner
5-8	Radar, Type A (1-5)
9-10	Radar, Type B
10	Airlock

Radar, Type A (0-1/4/5/10/20): Scanners back, left, right, up, down

Radar, Type B (0-2/6/10/20/40): Scanner front

Weapons

CF Laser (1-15/20/25/40; dam: 32): 2 mounted in a forward battery; covers front.

Missile Launcher (5-25/50/100/200): 1 mounted front, 1 mounted back. Q-Buoy

Hull Toughness: 24

Max Wounds: 9

Facings: 6

Armor: +6/30

Armor Points: 36

Shields: IRD CMP +3/33

Shield Configuration Points: 18

Reaction Drive: Value 30

Propulsion Points: 6 PP

Maneuver Rating: 5; +3/8 w/M-R software

Quantum Drive Rating: 28

Energy Plant: 1 Value 11 Fusion Plant

Total Energy Points: 150

Energy Point Breakdown: *Life support: 7 *Cargo: 5 CF Laser Battery: 22 Missile Launchers(2): 1(2) *Shields: 18 *Diagnostics: 1 Energy Sensor: 1 *Passive Sensors: 2 *Radar A Units(5): 1(5) *Radar B Unit: 3 Boarding Tubes: 5 *Reaction Drive: 35 Q-Drive: 35 *Computers: 6

Vital Energy Points: 82

Available Energy Points: 68

Energy Points Required to Power All Systems: 112

Reserve Energy Generation Capability: 38

Computer Point Value: 150 from one Value 11 Computer

Computer Point Breakdown: *Life Support: 7 *Cargo: 5 CF Laser Battery: 4 Missile Launcher(2): 3(6) *Shields: 6 *Diagnostics: 1 Energy Sensor: 1 *Passive Sensors: 2 *Radar A Units(5): 1(5) *Radar B Units: 2 Boarding Tubes: 3 Parrot Interface: 1 VR Goggles: 1 *Reaction Drive: 35 Q-Drive: 15 *Energy Plants: 22 AutoGunner 12: 6 AutoPilot 10: 12 AutoScan 12: 10 *Gee Comp 6: 6 Mnvr/Rx +2: 6 Navigation, Learn: 3 Navigation, Q-Drive:5 Probe, Simple (+3): 5 Probe, Advanced (+3): 8 Probe, Ship-to-Ship: 12 React 11: 4 Remote +3 3 Shield Boost +2: 6 Shunt 16: 8 Targeting +6: 3

Vital Computer Points: 91

Available Computer Points: 59

Notes:

Missile launchers each contain 1 Q-Buoy.

Ship's computer contains 1 complete set of the software shown above.

Equipment Bays contain 1 5 -man Boarding Tube and an EVMS unit.

Equipment Lockers contain 5 ENVI suits, 1 set of Mag Clamps and a WolfQrms GP1 Assault System with 6 extra magazines.

Hull streamlined (+1 Stealth) and fitted with wings for atmospheric operations.

Pod Bay contains 2 Probe Pods.

Vehicle Bays contain 1 Kereteka 8-legged Spider Prospector and 6 Harvestman spiders.

Ship carries 6 Decoy Pods, 1 Distress Beacon, 1 Parrot Interface, 1 Storage Drive 5, and 1 set of VR Goggles.

Ship equipped with a 5-man Airlock, a 1-man Bridge, a 5-man Deluxe Lounge, 5 Coldsleep modules, a 1-man Room. ❑

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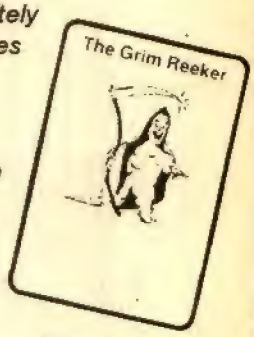

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Technobabble

The Art of Making Sense of Nothing

By Curtis Craddock © 1995 ❖ Art by Bradley K. McDevitt © 1995

"Captain!" shouted the engineer "The hyperspace inducer can't take that kind of pressure. The coil will atomize and we'll end up as space dust!"

The captain turned a puzzled glance to the engineer, his eyes beetling behind dark glasses. "What the hell are you talking about?"

What, indeed, is he talking about? Well, as most sci-fi fans can tell you, it's the scientific jargon of the far flung future, and part of the flavor of any space opera setting. In teleplay shorthand it is called "tech" - short for "technobabble" - and despite the spice it adds to a story it's an ingredient often omitted from the role-playing venue. Why? Because despite its potential usefulness, it lacks any vehicle for its presentation.

For the purpose of developing a "technobabble" vehicle in role-playing, it is easiest to consider the whole range of "tech" when divided into three loose categories:

The first and most popular "tech" is doubletalk. Doubletalk comprises most of the science fiction "technical language" we see on television or on the big screen. It consists of large and/or unusual words that pertain to fictitious assumptions like "hyperspace" or "warp energy" which make the show run. Doubletalk language doesn't mean very much in and of itself and makes little attempt to be internally consistent. It usually serves to present the story characters with some sort of problem which must be dealt with through means outside the framework of technical language. (i.e. the warp phase inducer is busted, meaning the ship can't go anywhere until we get some unobtanium crystals to fix it.)

The second type of "tech", seen less frequently in TV and the movies but more frequently in books, is that which composes an internally logical set. For the sake of discussion I'll call this "singletalk". Like doubletalk, singletalk consists of outrageous terms which pertain to fictitious assumptions. Unlike doubletalk, however, singletalk is logically consistent with itself. This allows the characters to puzzle through "technical" difficulties which are actually logic problems. (i.e. we know that if the vaccine was working, our dermis would be producing "melanin-P". If we were producing "melanin-P" we would all have purple spots. We don't have purple spots therefore the vaccine isn't working correctly.)

Telling the difference between doubletalk and singletalk isn't always easy, but this rule of thumb applies: if, knowing only

what you know as a viewer, you could have eventually puzzled out the solution to a "technical" problem, it's singletalk. If there simply weren't enough logical connections between the problem and the solution for an outside viewer to solve the puzzle, it's doubletalk.

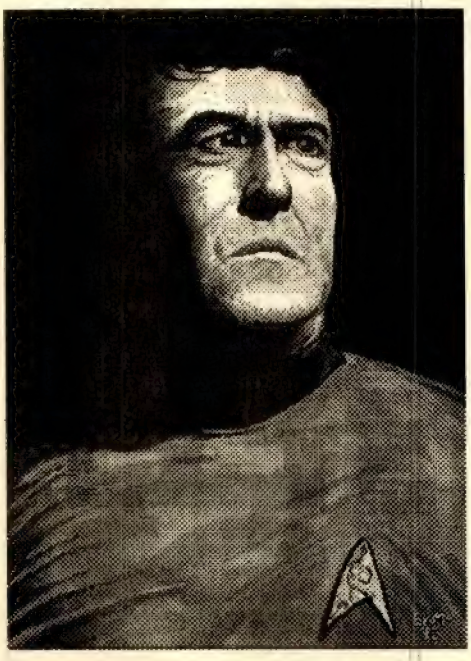
The third type of tech I will call "hard tech". Hard tech is language where characters engage in technical discussions of phenomenon which are "real", and have their roots in real world science. "Hard tech" is rarely seen in TV and movies and is decreasingly met with in books (which is ironic, because it was hard tech which largely launched the science-fiction genre). An educated discussion of orbital dynamics would be hard tech.

Most of the "tech" used in role playing is of the doubletalk variety; the GM uses a technical excuse to get the PC's into some kind of adventure, complicate their problem by fouling up a critical piece of machinery, or adding a "scientific" difficulty such as an alien disease or inexplicable malfunction. You know you are in a "doubletalk" situation where the solution is extrinsic to the player's knowledge of the "science" of the situation. In other words if the PC's need to find, fix, start or stop something non-"scientifically", and/or if the involvement of the PC in the solution of a technical problem is limited to the application of a C-sheet skill (i.e. making a science roll), it's doubletalk.

For example: The space ship occupied by the PC's has been invaded by an energy being which has drained the vessel's primary fuel cells and is rapidly damaging the fuel linkages searching for fuel residue. The only readily available source of fuel is a nearby encampment of their mortal enemies, the Vagueons. Rising to this challenge, the PC's stage a daring infiltration into the Vagueon camp, escape with some fuel cells and use an empty fuel cell to lure the energy creature out an airlock. Then, while the engineer repairs the fuel linkages, they refuel the ship and escape.

This could be a fun adventure, wild and raucous or dark and dangerous depending on the mood of the game, but the "tech" is largely reserved for creating a situation that the characters solve through outside means. Indeed the role of a PC engineer's player in fixing the damaged machine might be limited to rolling his repair dice at the end. Obviously the character is drawing on a vast pool of knowledge, but the player is actually uninvolved in the process. This can be frustrating to a involved player because finding creative uses for their character's skills can be difficult without an adequate frame of reference.

Most GM's who try to add a "technical" depth to their campaigns often discover that it isn't as easy as it might initially seem. Most of us have been seeing, hearing and using doubletalk for a long time, and we don't initially realize that in order to add depth to the game we are now trying to utilize singletalk. We find that when we



present a logic puzzle to our players in the guise of a technical problem they don't know what we're talking about. Even players who would rather be solving a puzzle than chasing after unobtanium samples are sometimes confused by the signals we send, and the result is all-around frustration.

The problem is one of language. The GM and the players don't share a "technical vocabulary" that is complete or consistent, and therefore cannot talk about science without confusion.

A possible solution is to develop a game "pscience" and to give technically inclined PC's access to its inner workings. A pscience is a group of pseudo-scientific terms which are all related to each other in a concrete fashion and which have consistent effects on the game. In other words, the GM creates a dictionary of terms which are, for the purposes of the game, absolute values, each of which is an ingredient in a pscientific recipe. By creating a solid pscientific language the GM gives the players a frame of reference within which they can discuss or solve problems. It also helps bring the technical aspect of the created universe to life and gives greater dramatic relevance to technical skills by making them more "real" to the players.

A good way to go about creating this "jargon", is to write each pscientific term down on an index card, along with a general definition of what it means, what game effect it could entail if invoked, and how it relates to the other term cards. Table I is an example of a set of term cards, all of which relate to a starship's main engines. In this case, each card is divided into three basic parts: NAME, TYPE, and EFFECT.

The NAME of a term is simply that. The most important thing to remember about a "tech" NAME is that, once defined, it becomes a very specific entity with only one specific definition (rather like a dictionary entry). Whenever this term is referred to in the game it should refer to the stated definition or unnecessary confusion will result.

The TYPE of the term describes the function of the term within the overall pscience being created. In this example there are several TYPEs of terms: systems, components, items and procedures.

Systems are sets of terms which function together to have an overall effect within the game. Most other terms serve to modify the effects of systems. Systems may contain smaller "subsystems" but all are eventually composed of components, which are the most basic elements that a character in the game will be expected to deal with in the singletalk mode. Any "subcomponents" the character has to deal with can be dealt with by doublespeak methods (i.e. by doing something "non-technical" or by rolling dice). This also gives the GM the chance to opt out of singletalk logic puzzles for a different kind of adventure.

Items are pieces of equipment or other foreign objects that are not part of any system but which affect them nonetheless.

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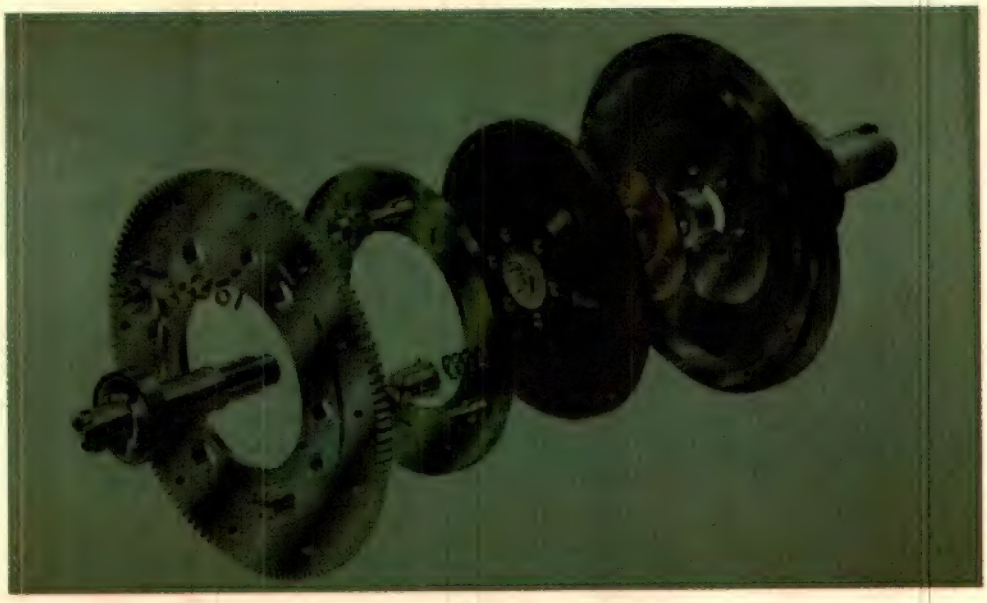


An item could be the legendary optical omni-ratchet or a strange green radioactive meteorite that has a peculiar effect on the life support systems of the ship.

Procedures are routines that can be performed by characters in order to accomplish certain effects within the scope of the pscience. The category of Procedures also includes any strange phenomenon that might effect the way spaceship works. A photon storm "procedure" might render the filter pump for the deflector shields inoperable.

The EFFECT of any given term is either the effect the operation of that particular term has in the game, the effect it has on other terms within the pscience, or both. The effect of the warp drive system, for example, is simply that it makes the ship move through warp space, if all its sub-systems and components are working correctly. This is the place where the GM can make his or her technology interesting, challenging and potentially dangerous. Perhaps performing a Kavortian bypass will get the warp drive running without the benefit of a flux inducer but it might flood the engineering complex with zeta radiation. "Alright everyone, dose up on anti-rad and get the shield suits on, we've got to get this baby up and running now!"

Two advantages of using index cards for creating your pscience are:

First, they give your player something to hold onto. Simply having a dozen or so cards in hand automatically gives a player the feeling of being in control of something. It also gives them a visual reference for any problem you hand them involving that pscience; before long they'll be laying the cards out in sequences like a flow chart to figure out how to get around the fact that the Vagueons stole their flux coil.

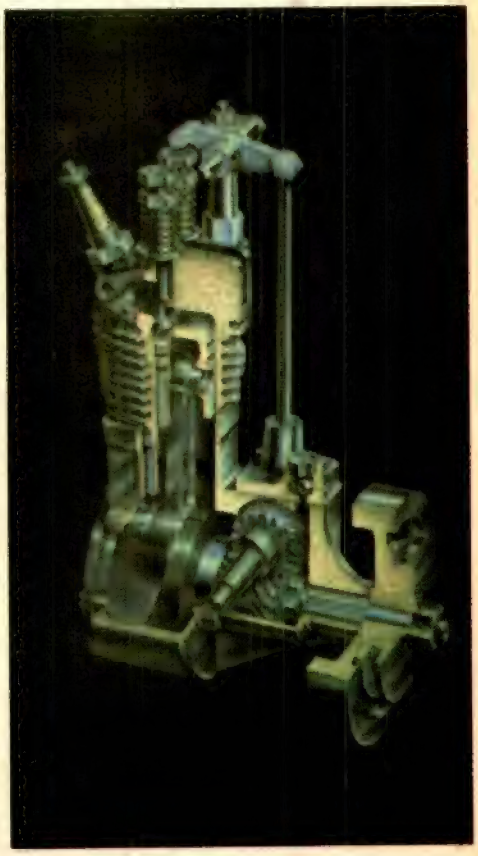
Second, they're expandable. Nobody wants to be stuck trying create an entire pscience at one sitting. The best thing to do is to start small and just add on until you have what for game purposes constitutes a full blown scientific paradigm.

Used as a plot device, the "term card" approach can help motivate and surprise your players. You certainly don't have to give your engineer a copy of all the cards at the beginning of the campaign (and if you like to tinker, you'll be adding a few more to your stockpile every week anyway.) New terms can be a reward for studying, stealing alien technology or just sheer inventiveness. They might come automatically whenever the relevant skills were improved on the C-sheet. Also, if you want to make a certain system a little more complex or add on a few new effects, you can just withdraw a couple of cards and replace them with updates, without unfairly changing the rules on the player. Whole campaigns could revolve around the search for a new technology.

In fact, there is no reason whatsoever that technobabble should be confined to the science fiction genre. "Singletalk" is an attempt to create a framework in which people can discuss the logic consequences of an impossible (or highly unlikely) system of reality. It could be made to apply with equal facility to the system of magic in a fantasy world, or to a pscience of psionics in a world where telepathy exists. It could also be used to translate real world "hard tech" into terms that players can deal with. A player may not know anything about high explosives, but his or her demolitions expert character certainly would.

Designing a set of tech cards to represent the pscience of explosives could help create and resolve some truly high stress situations.

The purpose behind "tech cards" is to give players access to the fantastic realms of knowledge and by so doing to give GM's a tool by which to add a new dimension to the enjoyable challenge of role-playing. Every GM is different, as is every group of players. If the concept of singletalk appeals to your style, experiment with it. You may want to make the system hard and fast, or even more open-ended. You may want to



make it more complex or even simpler. You are the best judge of how your own style works.

This having been said, there is a huge difference between defining a cow as, "a female bovine quadruped," and demonstrating the phenomenon by producing an actual cud chewing, milk giving ungulate. The following section is an example of how tech cards can be used to present a group of player characters with a choice. This example uses the cards on Table I.:

Game Master: (to engineer) "Your magnetic bottle is fluctuating erratically."

Engineer: (consults 'magnetic bottle' card and blanches) "Great. We could go boom. This thing is controlled by the computer. What does the computer say?"

Game Master: "Computer is feeding it all the right instructions. The problem is with the bottle itself."

Engineer: "Damn." (Turns to another player) "Captain, we have a problem. The magnetic bottle in the warp coil is fluctuating erratically."

Captain: "Meaning what?"

Engineer: "If the bottle is compromised we get an uncontrolled anti-proton flow in the reaction chamber, and the ship goes up like a supernova."

Captain: "Can you fix it?"

Engineer: "Yes, sir, but we'll have to shut down the warp coil."

1st Mate: (butting in) "It takes thirty hours to restart the warp coil and we have to be on Antares in twenty four."

Engineer: "If we don't fix it we'll get there in ten hours, as hyperspace dust."

Captain: "Is there anything you can do?"

Engineer: (ponders for a moment) "Well, I could try to make an Edlington's bubble. The only problem is that means closing the radiation vents which means that in a few hours we start leaking radiation into the ship."

Captain: (to GM) "How long until we reach Antares?"

GM: "About twelve hours..."

Hopefully this will spark fire for the creative imagination. The possibilities of drama are as endless as the language that creates them. ❑

Table I: Example Technobabble Cards

NAME: Warp Energy.

TYPE: Item.

EFFECT: Warp energy motivates starships at speeds greater than light. Direct exposure to warp energy causes grotesque and usually fatal mutations in carbon based life forms.

NAME: Warp Coil.

TYPE: System.

COMPONENTS: Reaction Chamber, Magnetic Bottle, Radiation Vents, Phase Pump.

EFFECT: Converts Anti-Proton fuel into warp energy.

NAME: Magnetic Bottle.

TYPE: Component.

EFFECT: This receives antiprotons from the fuel cells and contains them until they form warp energy. If it is damaged or un-controlled, anti-protons will build up. A massive anti-proton build up will detonate the ship. It's computer controlled.

NAME: Edlington's Bubble.

TYPE: Procedure.

EFFECT: By use of this technique, an engineer can bypass the magnetic bottle. The process requires a great deal of radiation and the usual method for accomplishing it onboard a starship involves shutting the radiation vents tight.

NAME: Unobtanium.

TYPE: Item.

EFFECT: This is an artificial element created by exposing hydrocarbon strings to warp energy. The exact process for making it is secret. It blocks/contains warp energy. Anything made of unobtanium may not be rebuilt/repaired without spacedock, only patched.

NAME: Reaction Chamber.

TYPE: Component.

EFFECT: This is the outer casing of the warp coil. It prevents warp enerqr from escaping. If the reaction chamber is compromised, Warp Energy may leak into the ship. It is made of unobtanium.

NAME : Rebuild/Repair.

TYPE: Procedure.

EFFECT: Most of the components of a ship can be either rebuilt or repaired without having to use a spacedock. This always involves shutting down any system the component is part of. Components made of unobtanium may not be repaired without spacedock.

NAME: Radiation Vents.

TYPE: Component.

EFFECT: These shunt off excess radiation from the reaction chamber into space. Left wide open, they would drain all energy from the warp coil within an hour. If left closed, radiation would begin leaking into the ship within eight hours.

NAME: Phase pump.

TYPE: Component.

EFFECT: This transfers antiprotons from the fuel cells to the magnetic bottle. It is computer controlled. If it is damaged, the warp coil will shut down. If it goes out of control it may either feed too quickly (causing the magnetic bottle to be damaged,) or too slowly (causing the warp coil to shut down.)

The Importance of Family Clans

Part One: the Medieval Clan

By Leonard and Ann Wilson © 1995 ❖ Art by Michael S. Harmon © 1995

Have you ever played in a fantasy campaign where the player characters had a life outside the dungeon? More of a life, that is, than expeditions into the wilderness and the occasional week of R&R in town? Some characters go so far as to build strongholds and operate out of them, of course. But how many of them *really* have lives?

When Throg the Mighty comes home for the winter after an arduous campaign against the frog folk of Granth, will he really be satisfied to spend all those long, cold nights curled up with his war horse for warmth? Or are we supposed to believe he has a steady supply of casual lovers who all walk conveniently in and out of his life with no regrets, regardless of how fond they may have become of him or whether or not they're carrying his child?

And speaking of children, is our dauntless warrior never troubled by the thought that though he lives life forever on the edge and may die any day in his quest for glory, there's no little Throg Junior toddling around the castle to carry on his legacy when he's gone? Then there's Throg's aging, widowed mother: her arthritis keeps her from anything that could earn her an independent living, and the Sunnydale Rest Home across town won't be built for another thousand years. Does her ungrateful wretch of an only child leave her to starve alone out in the cold?

The good old American nuclear family that supposed traditionalists lament the break-up of is itself a broken-down version of the clan organization of families that has predominated through most of recorded history. The notion that government is obligated to provide for those of its subjects unable to provide for themselves is a very new thing. In the days before popular government, you counted on your extended family to bail you out if you ever got into

trouble you couldn't handle on your own, and your extended family counted on you to return the favor. Yet most players of FRPGs can't even tell you the names of their characters' parents. They live in a genealogical vacuum.

Filling this vacuum can add incredible depth, dimension and meaning to the lives of the characters in a campaign. When an adventurer is down on her luck, she can count on cousin Gertrude to give her a crust of bread and a place to sleep. When an adventurer is on top of the world, she can count on cousin Getrude to drop by the castle and ask for a cushy job ("The old hovel is getting so drafty. It's bad for the children").

Nepotism was a way of life in medieval times. It just made sense. Why leave someone you hired off the street to look after your castle and its treasure, when you could knight your own brother and make him your chamberlain? That isn't to say there weren't occasional inter-sibling plots and jealousies, of course, but betrayal was much more likely if you put your trust in someone who wasn't bound to you by an obligation of blood.

The families of player characters can offer a wealth of adventure opportunities for a campaign. A PC's family may be embroiled in a blood feud with another clan before the game begins, or become embroiled in such a feud during game play; the more powerful and important a character is, the more relatives he's going to have coming to him to beg for help with various problems. Even without involving the extended family, a quest to avenge the murder of a parent or sibling is a classic fantasy story hook (though obviously one you wouldn't want to overuse.)

If you're running a chivalric campaign in which the characters are knights and nobles, it becomes vitally important that you know who their relatives are. Marriage was a blatant political tool in medieval times, used to cement alliances between clans; and noble titles were handed out far more often on the basis of blood than on the basis of merit. When a great landholder died without an undisputable heir as his successor, the predictable result was chaos and civil war, as rival claimants fought tooth and nail for control of his realm.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of all to be had from developing a family for your favorite character, though, is that it can take some of the sting out of her eventual death if you know that her daughter will some day take up arms and follow in her footsteps.

The Nature of the Clan

Just as a nuclear family is formed by the splintering of a clan, a clan is formed by the splintering of a tribe. As a family unit, the tribe was considered antiquated and of little importance to most medieval societies, just as the clan is held in little regard by most Americans today. To consider oneself part of a tribe was a custom generally left to pre-feudal "barbarians."

Dictionaries and encyclopedias are reluctant to let themselves be pinned down on exactly how to define the word "tribe" - because it has been used to describe so many different large social units - but the most reliable and useful distinction we can make between tribes and clans is that clansmen are always related unilineally; tribesmen are related bilineally.

Being bilineally related means that the members of a tribe trace their familial relationship to each other through both the male and female lines, while the unilineal nature of a clan means that its members trace their relationship to each other through either the male line or the female line, but not both. A male-lineage clan is referred to as patrilineal and a female-lineage clan is matrilineal. You have to know which of the two your PC's clan is before you can start to develop it.

In a culture whose clans are patrilineal, a married woman is considered a full member of her own clan and an honorary member of her husband's clan, while her husband and children are all simply members of the husband's clan. In a matrilineal culture, the reverse is true.

Within a clan, the practice of nepotism ensures that its members will tend to be of the same broad social class (upper, middle, or lower,) and encourages them to go into the same line of work. Thus you needn't sit down for any heavy brainstorming sessions when you try to flesh out a character's relatives by assigning them jobs. If you know how even one makes a living, you've got a pretty good idea of how they all do. There are exceptions, of course, but discussing them would turn this into an essay on medieval economics as much as one on medieval family structure, and it would be folly to try to discuss both topics in the small space allotted in a magazine.

Patrilineal Clans

Thanks largely to the influence of the conquering Roman Empire (and its spiritual heir, the Roman Catholic Church), patrilineal cultures dominated western society throughout most of the Middle Ages. All the major societies of the modern western world developed from these cultures, and thus the modern reader should already be well acquainted with most of their customs. As the importance of blood relation thins, though, we tend to forget the past significance of a child's legitimacy.

In our day, although most men would clearly resent having to raise another man's son by his unfaithful wife, a child's legitimacy is otherwise an exclusively spiritual concern. The church says it's a sin to bear a child out of wedlock, so illegitimate children, their mothers and sometimes their fathers carry a stigma in many social circles. In the days before the rise of puritanism, however (which includes all of the Middle Ages,) legitimacy was far less a spiritual issue than a political one, and the illegitimate son of a knight by a peasant woman would proudly brag of his relationship to his father.

Because political power and wealth were both inherited, and inherited through the male line, it was vitally important to know who a child's father was. Marriage created a sacred contract that would theoretically keep a man's wife from sleeping with any but him, and thus create a reasonable security that any children she bore would be his own. A casual lover, however, was always free to take other lovers. So it was hard indeed for a man to be sure when her children were his. The dichotomy of legitimacy versus illegitimacy arose from a father's need to be sure of his own children. This incidentally explains why a member of a patrilineal society might applaud a man's virility for sleeping around, then mercilessly condemn his wife in the next breath for a single indiscretion.

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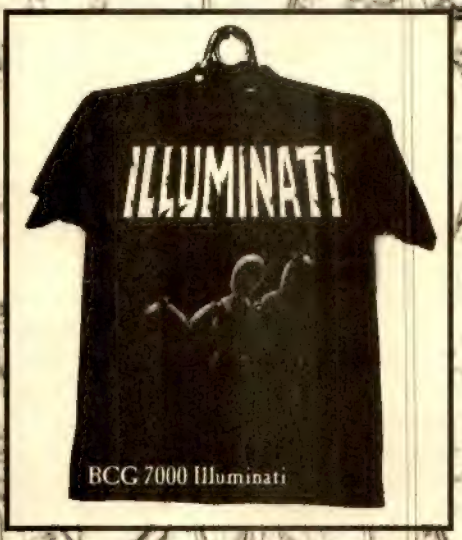

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The practice of concubinage, common to many patrilineal societies of the Middie Ages, allowed a compromise between the dichotomy of legitimate and illegitimate children. The arrangement was essentially a temporary marriage. In most cases it endured until the man chose to dismiss his concubine, and any children born of the union were considered "sort of" legitimate. For the legal purposes of inheritance they were considered younger than any fully legitimate siblings they might have, no matter when which was born, but they were in all other ways treated as legitimate.

Unless polygamy was allowed in his society, a man could no more take a wife while he still had a concubine than he could take a second wife while still married to his first. Taking multiple concubines was a similar violation of the rule of monogamy.

Matrilineal Clans

By their very nature, matrilineal clans need have little concern over their children's parentage; the identity of the mother is never in question and the identity of the father is irrelevant in determining a child's place in society. Removing this simple stress can transform a culture profoundly. There is no male equivalent of the concubine, for instance, because the whole concept becomes pointless. If a woman wants a temporary relationship, she takes a lover instead of a husband. No public contract of faithfulness is necessary.

Marriage can still be a political tool for a matrilineal clan, especially in a patriarchal society. The structure of such a society would be one in which rulership passed from the husband of one clan elder to the husband of the next - an arrangement which existed among the Picts of northern Britain in the early medieval period. Matrilineal cultures in general (and those that are also matriarchal in particular,) will tend to view marriage in a much less somber and stately light than patrilineal cultures do, and marriages for love will be much more common.

An interesting side-effect of the matrilineal structure is that boys look to their maternal uncles and not their fathers for instruction and support. In the unlikely event of a blood-feud between a man's sons and his nephews, he would be honor bound to side with his nephews since they - and not his sons - are members of his clan.

With the medieval family structure defined, next issue we'll provide you with the concrete payoff to this abstract discussion: a set of tables to help you create clans for your characters and to guide you in allowing those clans to grow and develop as your campaign progresses. ❑

The Best Things In Life ... Aren't Things

Alternate Rewards For Your RPGs

By Steve Madill © 1995 ❖ Artwork by Lorelle Ahlstrom © 1995

A final shove on the sword, and the exhausted party members slumped to the ground, panting heavily. After a tremendous fight, the shy, demure dragon was at last safe from the evil, wretched princess (why not?)

Wiping their collective brow, the party looked up and smiled at their reptilian beneficiary, which sat quietly on its mountainous heap of gold, gems, magical items and certified cheques. Each character rejoiced inwardly, in gleeful anticipation of what would certainly be a generous reward for their heroism.

With a gentle cough that filled the lair with the acrid smell of sulphur, the dragon smiled at the party. "You have done me an inestimable service, the value of which is beyond the measure of any monetary sum."

On the faces of several characters, smiles began to fade.

The dragon continued. "As my way of showing my boundless gratitude for the help you have given me, please permit me to grant you this..." digging between two of its scales with a claw, the giant beast extracted a small gem that had been lodged there. Looking over the marble-sized ruby lovingly, the dragon flicked it towards the party leader. "If ever you should yourselves be in need, and wish for an ally, just hold the gem and call my name. I shall be there at once, and fight to the end beside you."

John stood up, scattering his dice and almost spilling his cola. "What!? We went through all that, and all we get is one lousy gem!? It's worth what - two, three hundred gold, and Big Red Fatso there is sitting on millions! What a rip-off!"

Just as every bad deed deserves a punishment, every good deed deserves a reward. But let's face it, gifts of money and magical items have been done before. In fact, such gifts have been handed out so often that sometimes they become expected!

There must be something else a thankful NPC can give a party or a character as a reward; something that doesn't make the recipient more powerful than a speeding locomotive or rich enough to buy half the campaign world.

That 'something else' is what this article is all about. There are a great number of things that NPCs can grant characters or parties that mean a great deal in terms of role-playing value, but have less weight when it comes to the numeric power of the character. Just as variety is the spice of life, so too can variety and imagination add volumes to the flavour and feeling of the

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campaign world, perhaps even leading to new adventures.

Let's take a look at three groups of gift ideas: Honors, Favors and Responsibilities.

Honors

The Imperial Throne Room fell silent as the God-Emperor stood up from his throne and descended the steps to stand before the kneeling paladin Vivian. The hallowed halls of the Grand Palace resonated with the deity's deep voice. "Vivian Justblade, you have saved myself and my dynasty from the grasp of Evil Incarnate. The Empire owes you an incalculable debt of gratitude for defeating the demon armies, and I owe you a personal debt of honor for leading my rescue. Arise now, Archduke Justblade, Defender Of The Empire, and let your name be spoken with honor and reverence from the four corners of the Empire, now and for all time."

For a grateful lord, the easiest way to show someone your appreciation is to grant them some form of honor. It involves little outlay of money or commitment, but confers considerable prestige to the heroic character, with a title, badge of honor or coat of arms; instant recognition throughout the realm.

1. Titles

The classic symbol of honor is the title, which can take several forms. The most recognizable is the dubbing of the character into knighthood or making the character a member of the nobility. They could become, in a Brittanic-style nobility, a knight, a baron, viscount, marquess, earl or duke. Special or exotic titles could be used to give your own campaign world flavor, like pasha, markgraf, freiherr, sultan, vizier, nabob, castellan, or chancellor.

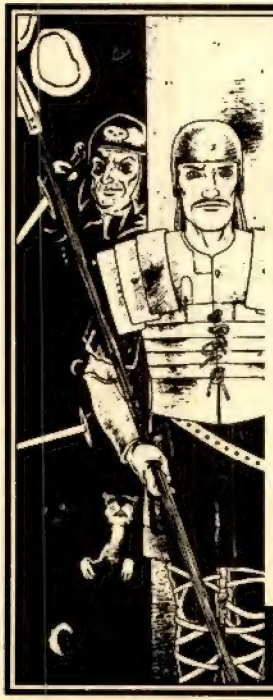
The title could also be in the form of an epithet, which is like a formalized reputation. Coming after the character's normal name, epithets could include "the Mighty," "the Gallant," "the Pious," "the Brave," and of course "the Not Quite So Brave." Epithets such as "the Great" are reserved for the truly heroic character, while less pleasant epithets like "the Mad" or "the Impaler" give the bearer their own certain style, perfect for infamous NPCs.

When giving a title, the GM should consider whether or not a fiefdom comes with it. If so, the direction of the character's career suddenly takes a considerable shift. New responsibilities such as taxation of the peasants, construction of the stronghold and diplomacy with the neighbours enter the picture. Remember as well that some feudal systems required those with specific titles to provide specified numbers of infantry, archers, knights and equipment to their liege lord in the event of war.

2. Symbols

The title, especially that associated with knighthood, is a useful way to tell a character "well done," but it is sometimes over-used to the point of becoming a clichè. Another way to reward a character for a deed well done might be to bestow some form of symbol or badge of honor upon them, much like a soldier of today would earn a medal.

For your own campaign world, you can create a complete range of colourful honors and awards, giving the world its own flavor. You could use what we today would recognize as 'medals' along with such sym-



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Sir Jeteki quickened his pace and moved his hand closer to the hilt of his sword as he scanned the shadows for signs of movement. He had left his friends back at the bar and his armor back at the palace. Now he was seriously regretting the entire outing. Suddenly, two men stepped out of the alley just ahead of him. As they drew short swords from under their dark cloaks, Jeteki glanced over his shoulder to see a third man stepping out behind him, a glint of metal reflecting moonlight under his cloak as well. He quickly considered his options. Three on one was a dangerous fight, even for the greatest swordsman in Trent, especially without armor, and there was no knowing how many more were lurking in the shadows. As the two in front closed on him, spreading to encircle him, Jeteki drew his sword and slipped it past one man's feeble parry and into his gut, dropping him instantly. He nimbly dodged the attack of the second thug and turned to face both remaining assailants while slowly backing in the direction of the city gates, and safety....

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"The cave people had apparently worshipped some beast, and as we fled the cave, it appeared. It was huge. No, not what you're thinking, but truly immense. Forget armored scales, its mere bulk made any thought of killing it with sword or spear ridiculous. I considered that there were one or two spells I could think of that might *kill it, but I didn't want to get close enough to find out. My companions apparently agreed, and we all cowered in the ditch and hoped it didn't notice us as it spread its wings and flew away."*

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bols as capes, sashes, sacred carvings in wood or rock, feathers from mythical birds, jeweled rings or even tattoos. Symbols could come in different degrees of prestige, topping out with legendary tokens of honor on a par with the Congressional Medal of Honor or the Victoria Cross. Or symbols could come in a range, wherein each variant symbolizes the specific virtue of the recipient. One example set might be the Sarils, dyed eagle feathers braided into the hair of heroes in my own campaign world (see sidebar).

3. Coats of Arms

The ultimate symbol, a coat of arms, immortalizes a character in your campaign world, even if they should never attain the heights of knighthood or nobility. A coat of arms might be passed down from generation to generation, evolving as it merges with the arms of other houses by marriage.

In the Middle Ages, the rules for heraldry were largely standardized. As a result, it was possible for heraldry specialists ("heralds") to take a look at an oncoming horseman's shield and figure out who the person was by 'reading' the person's family tree.

Usually starting with a symbol that represents the bearer or some achievement of that person, the coat of arms can be added to endlessly with wreaths, mantling, helms, supporters and so on, gradually evolving into an intricate and artistic pictorial story of the bearer's family and accomplishments. For more information and examples of heraldry, stop in at your library or bookstore.

Titles and epithets, badges of honor and coats of arms grant considerable prestige to player characters, as well as a strong sense of belonging. They also help the ordinary people of the campaign world immediately realize where the character lies in The Grand Scheme Of Things. Of course, this includes ordinary people of competing or hostile realms, which can lead to uncomfortable or downright dangerous situations for the titled character.

Favors

Gruel the Half-Orc looked again at the small gem in his hand, then peered skeptically at the thankful dragon, still sitting quietly on its giant mountain of cash in easy-to-carry bags.

"Lemmesee if I get this straight. We saved your behind from Princess Buffy the Cruel, and you're really thankful. But you're so thankful, you're not going to give us gold or magical objects."

The huge drake blinked and nodded slowly. "Correct, friend. Some things cannot be measured in gold and silver."

Gruel started nodding himself, "Riiiiight, so instead you're gonna give us this itty bitty gem, which we can use to call you if we need help."

"Correct again, friend."

"And you will come and help us? We're just a bunch of blades-for-hire."

"You might be blades, but you're the blades who saved my life. I will help."

"You would fight for us?"

"To the death, friend. I owe you that much."

Gruel and his friends looked again at the gem. They were rich after all!

Gruel's reptilian friend makes an important point: some kinds of help are valuable beyond measure. The dragon in this case feels he cannot put a monetary value on his debt to the party, and the GM would be frightened to try! When the relieved dragon or king says, "I don't have enough to pay you," how many parties would quickly say, "Oh sure you do. Just take us to the vault and repeat after me: 'Help yourself!'"

Trying to reward a party monetarily for every great deed they perform is a dreadful trap. To make the next reward seem like a real bounty, the temptation is strong to just add a couple of zeroes. Pretty soon the party is buying powerful magical items to go along with their shiny new plate armor, fast horses and gigantic keeps. And heaven help the GM who tries to placate the party's calls for treasure with magic items! Often we hear the lament of GMs whose campaign worlds have been overrun by hopelessly powerful adventuring parties. The road to that situation begins with the first attempt by the GM to 'wow' the party with the number of zeroes he can add to a sum of gold.

True, it is necessary to impress the party, to give them a reward for a well-done adventure that gives them the pleasant taste of accomplishment and success. But gold translates directly into power, and should be handled with care. Magic especially should remain rare, for it is the rarity of magic that makes it special. Titles and tokens of honor might not be appropriate, for the grateful being might not be in a position to bestow 'official' rewards of that sort. However, there is one thing that every single grateful being has the authority to give: itself.

Consider Gruel's revelation in the lair of the grateful dragon. The party leaves the lair no wealthier, with no great magical items to weigh them down or titles or medals to trumpet their deeds, but they do exit the lair a great deal richer than they entered. They have an ace up their sleeve, and that ace is Big and Red and Scaly. The best part is, of course, that no one knows but them.

The long-term implications for the campaign are wonderful; the characters continue their adventuring career with slightly more confidence, knowing that they have something very rare in any campaign world: an ally. And, somewhere down the line, when Gruel and his friends get in more trouble than they can handle, that ace can be played to really stack the deck in their favor.

The experience I've had with giving people allies has been positive. It gives them a healthier outlook on the campaign

Sarils

Black	Sotok-saril	Mourning (worn by anyone)
White	Malteth-saril	Purity
Gold	Ronil-saril	Self-sacrifice
Silver	Holon-saril	Devotion
Red	Vardel-saril	Bravery
Crimson	Narin-saril	Valor
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world, for they can see it's not just Us-Against-Everything. There is also incentive to keep gaming, in the hopes of seeing the looks on the bad guys' faces when All Our Friends show up.

The concept of the Favor can be applied to a great many creatures, large and small. Ideas could include: dragons, archmages, priests or temples, lords and ladies, those who operate 'above the law' and wandering heroes or creatures of myth and legend. Even the 'little guys' of the campaign world can take part; a small creature like an ordinary bird could someday prove a useful ally when he performs reconnaissance for the party or even makes a deposit (as only birds can) on the enemy spellcaster at the Dramatically Appropriate Moment. The possibilities are only limited by the GM's imagination.

Responsibility

Marquess Ageem leaned far back in his throne, pressing his pudgy fingertips together while deep in thought. After what seemed an eternity to the assembled audience, he took a heavy breath and sighed, then spoke. "Sir Jerrold, you have rid my lands of the 'Burning Elf' kobold tribe, and have restored the Sacred Commode of S'Pleen to its proper resting place in the Temple of Colon. In fact, you have done a truly remarkable job of bringing law and order to what were, until now, wild and untamed lands."

Jerrold the knight bowed deeply. "I seek only to serve, my lord."

"And so you shall," blurted the portly noble, "indeed, you have shown a singular ability to serve and to create law and order. I have a new way in which you could continue to serve."

"You need but name it, my lord."

"Oh, but I shall, I shall. The southern districts of my lands are savage, filled with wilderness and depravity, inhabited only by fierce tribes of orcs, ogres and goblins. I hereby appoint you Lord Provost for my realms, and I set you the task of sweeping these southern areas of all the disreputable scum, finally bringing law and order to all my lands."

The knight's face flushed as his mind raced. What the hell? I only tricked the kobold chief into leaving...his eyes darted about the room as he stammered, "My...my lord, this is a most unusual appointment. I, er, uh...am unworthy of such an important and generous task. Um, there must be someone more worthy of this honor than myself."

Marquess Ageem dismissed the knight's protests with a wave of his hand. "Oh, posh, Jerrold. You have shown what you can do! Your modesty won't get you out of the honor you deserve. A hundred of my best men await you outside; you leave at once! Keep me informed of your progress, and may the gods go with you as they always have!"

The look on the lord's face signaled the end of the discussion, so Sir Jerrold stood to leave, his mind still swimming in the magnitude of his predicament. Unsteadily, he made his way towards the throne room doors, when the Marquess's voice came floating from behind him. "Oh, and Sir Jerrold, I happened to mention your spectacular skills to the Imperial House. His Highness is most interested in seeing your progress when He passes through next month. Ta ta, Jerrold!"

With the sound of a thousand pots and pans being thrown down a flight of stairs, the knight fainted and fell to the floor.

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Heroic characters, through their initiative, daring and (most often) blind luck, do heroic things; it's their job. Well, when a character shows particular ability at his calling, be it ridding the world of undead, creating new and violent spells, or good old fashioned orc-punting, a grateful (and prudent) leader might begin to see the benefits in having the hero 'do their thing' full time. For the GM, this makes the granting of important duties or responsibilities a double-edged sword in terms of honors and rewards.

For instance, a knight like Sir Jerrold who demonstrates the ability to 'tame the wilderness' might get a job to do precisely that. Or he could be given command of a prestigious company of crack cavalry, commandos, archers or line infantry. Wizards could be given a post heading up an important arcane guild or school, while clerics might be similarly appointed the high priest for an area. As well as being important honors, these jobs bring that most dreaded of words with them: Responsibility. The character suddenly becomes accountable for the conduct and well being of their troop of cavalry, their school of mages, or their priests and priestesses. Furthermore, the character's boss is going to expect results, adding a challenging new dimension to the character's career. The cavalry unit is going to be expected to win a few battles; the arcane school is going to expect marks to improve, and the priests are going to expect more converts.

Another wonderful situation that bears a sharp edge to it is the noble who decides the character was so useful, he or she ought to be around all the time...literally. Those who prove themselves especially useful and trusted to a noble might find themselves made an official Advisor to the noble household. When Archduke Whitehawk becomes Imperial Advisor, he is going to have the Emperor's ear... and he is going to have to produce results. If he gives good advice, he will become more and more trusted, and greater and greater honors will be heaped upon him. One bad recommendation that gets a thousand of the Imperial Guard slaughtered, however, and the Imperial Advisor could very well become Imperial Dungeon Resident.

Apart from the expectation to produce results, the other nasty part of receiving such an honorable and prestigious appointment is that the character's adventuring career is more or less over. Instead, they will be spending most of their time hanging around the throne room, listening to speeches from long-winded ambassadors, and delivering keynote addresses at various Imperial functions. Fun, wheee. As a result, this particular form of torture, er, honor is often best saved until the character is powerful enough that the GM would prefer they spent less time laying waste to the campaign world. It's a form of semi-retirement, where the heroic character would still be able to venture forth on rare occasions, to personally fulfill some special mission for his lord or Emperor (like finding some dumb kid named Skywalker, for instance...)

Conclusion

Money and magic translate directly into more powerful characters, and not only make the next adventure less challenging, but can actually create the expectation of more money or more powerful magical items the next time out. GMs need more non-monetary and non-magical rewards and treasures to bestow upon characters, or run the risk of losing their campaign in a wash of gold.

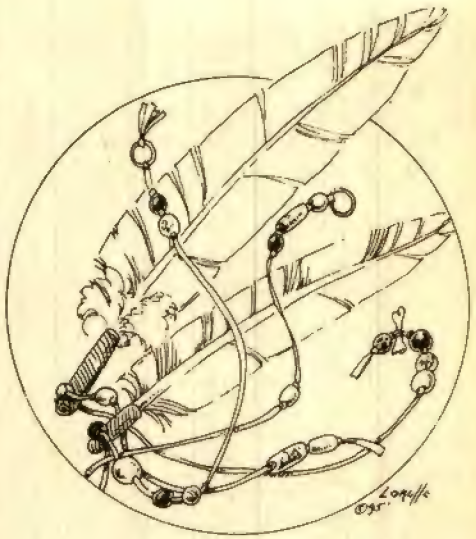
There are countless examples of rewards and honors to that cost little to the person bestowing the honor, but confer incredible levels of prestige to those who receive them.

Titles can be used either straight from history or made specific to a campaign world, and can come with or without fiefdoms. The character becomes an integral part of the campaign world itself, earning a sense of belonging and of being 'in on' the Grand Scheme of Things. Being recognised by the ordinary people of the campaign world gives a player a special feeling above and beyond the medals and symbols that invariably accompany such a title.

Creatures that have either no authority, no ability or no need to bestow titles or symbols can make the most sincere gift of all: themselves. When a given NPC makes a commitment to the character, the player gains a feeling of no longer 'being alone' in the campaign world. An ally they can call on is a powerful reason for characters to continue in the campaign world, not just with increased confidence but with the desire to feel the satisfaction when they cash in their favors.

Later on in their careers, characters often become so powerful that they have the ability to fundamentally alter the structure of the campaign world. As a result, the GM might wish to see them take a less direct role in the flow of things; a form of semi-retirement. Granting the character a special duty or responsibility in the structure of the campaign shows that they have at last 'arrived'. Although not yet fully retired, the character's direct influence is limited to a few special, memorable events as they slowly pass into the GM's hands as an important and remembered NPC in the world.

GMs have the capacity to create a truly enormous amount of color and flavor for their campaign world through the inventive use of some of the above ideas. Special titles, impressive and inspiring symbols of honor, interesting allies and a dignified end to a glorious career are all wonderful opportunities for the GM to lavishly reward the characters for good deeds well done - without making them hopelessly powerful. Over time, the campaign world can develop a backdrop of fascinating customs, prestigious symbols and most importantly of all, inspiring and memorable characters that the players fondly remember from days gone past. ❑



Cattle Call

Archetypes for Non-Player Characters

By Larry Granato © 1995 ❖ Art by Bradley K. McDevitt © 1995

The development of interesting non-player characters by gamemasters is one of the more challenging and fun parts of role-playing. There are many methods of creating elaborately detailed NPCs. However, GMs have limited amounts of time to work on their campaigns, and not every NPC can be a fully fleshed-out persona. Certainly, the more important NPCs deserve special development. But what about the bit players used in casual encounters? What do you do when the PCs want to talk to everyone they meet in a bar or on the street? They'll get tired of meeting one Mr. Generic after another (sorry, Joe Genero.) Resorting to random personality trait tables may generate NPCs with unrealistic and outlandish temperaments, aside from taking time to use. In this case, archetypical NPCs are the way to go.

Archetypical NPCs can be described in a line or maybe even a word. Yet they have a lot of intrinsic background because they represent common figures in fiction. Archetypes are quick and easy to use because they're like characters we've read about them or seen on the screen countless times. Both the GM and players are familiar with them. The GM instantly knows the mannerisms and personality that are appropriate and can role-play the character accordingly, without the work and time of creating an NPC from scratch. In fact, most GMs, consciously or unconsciously, use archetypes when coming up with NPCs.

Of course, PCs are based on archetypes as well. However, the heroic stereotypes used by PCs are not appropriate for your run-of-the-mill NPC encounters. These NPCs are not champions or great villains, but mostly just ordinary people. The fol-

lowing tables list some archetypical NPCs for use in modern role-playing games (those based in the near past or future.) The format is generic, with personalities described rather than statistics. If needed, the GM can generate abilities and skills suitable for each character. The NPCs presented are essentially "throwaway" characters, yet memorable enough to be used over again and developed further if needed.

Since the NPCs listed may seem quite stereotyped, the GM should occasionally consider playing the NPC against type. In other words, add an unusual twist to keep the party on their toes. Maybe the derelict turns out to be an college professor, or the little old lady is a judo expert. Restraint is necessary, however, as players tend to get paranoid when they have encounter after encounter with superhero janitors and psionic metermaids.

The first table, Military NPCs, can be used for soldiers, sailors, airmen or mercenaries. The second, Lowlifes, is applicable when the party meets people on the wrong side of town or uses that "streetwise" skill. Citizen NPCs are appropriate for most encounters. Upper Crust NPCs will rarely be encountered randomly, but are found at elite gathering spots and select social occasions.

Military NPCs

1. **The Kid** - He's young, gung-ho, and naive. He lied about his age to get in the service. He's probably going to die.

2. **The Top Sergeant** - This man has been in the army so long, he's practically an institution. If there's any way of getting something done, he'll find it.

3. **The Crazy** - This guy is always teetering on the edge of violence. He's almost as much a menace to friendlies as to the enemy. Quote: "I want to...kill."

4. **The Wiseguy** - Always quick with a joke or insult, this fellow is constantly ribbing the other characters and playing tricks on them.

5. **The Drill Sergeant** - No matter how bad things are, this bellowing taskmaster can make them worse. Quote: "I can't hear you, maggot! Get down and give me fifty!"

6. **The Parade Ground Soldier** - His uniform and kit is perfect and he's a paragon of military virtue while in garrison. He's always playing up to his superiors. One problem, though: he's gutless on the battlefield. The higher ranking version is the peacetime officer who's great at making logistics arrangements and keeping his troops and equipment in order - providing they don't have to actually be used in something as damaging as combat.

7. **The Barracks or Sea Lawyer** - This guy knows the regulations by heart and is always pushing for his "rights." He is skilled at instigating trouble and letting others take the blame. Of course, he still provides them with so-called legal advice.

8. **The Braggart** - A real loudmouth, ready to brawl with fellow soldiers anytime, but a washout in a firefight. Aged Braggarts become Old Campaigners, who have endless stories about their supposed heroics.

9. **The Farmboy** - This hayseed is of humble origins and the butt of many jokes. However, he's a crack shot and expert woodsman.

10. **The Maverick** - A decorated veteran who's often insubordinate, and may have lost rank because of it. He doesn't say much and won't take guff from anyone. Quote: "I don't get mad, I get even."

11. **The Operator** - He's always got something going- a card game, a scam, some passes, high-interest loans, an "investment." Somehow, this fast-talking smart guy keeps making money while others lose theirs. Equipment: dice and a deck of cards.

12. **The Scrounger** - He can come up with just about anything if the price is right. Quote: "I've got a deal for you."

13. **The Courier/Radioman** - He knows the best rumors, since he overhears the officers' discussions.

14. **The Coward** - He worries about being paralyzed by fear in combat, and with good reason. Aside from his normal gloom and doom, he will freeze up in battle, then run away (if he's a officer he will be incapable of making the right decision.) Quote: "We're all going to die!"

15. **The Rear Echelon Soldier** ("Chairborne Commando") - Never near combat, he's sometimes encountered hunting around for war souvenirs when the fight is over. The higher-ranking equivalent is the lifer-a career officer or NCO who simply wants to put in the years remaining until his retirement without making any undue effort. He provides little, if any, leadership, and is never around when there is trouble.

16. **The Slacker** - A soldier who's expert at getting out of work. When officers appear, he's a hive of energy. Otherwise, he loafs, telling other soldiers they're stupid for working hard. He's a regular at sick call. Quote: "Hey, buddy! Can you carry my pack? I think I twisted my ankle."

17. **Pop** - The oldest soldier in the unit, he's a respected and canny veteran.

18. **Doc** - A medic whose bravery in saving lives in unsurpassed. Equipment: medical kit.

19. **The Supply Sergeant** - Need something? Better have all the paperwork in order. You do? Sorry, but other units have a higher priority. You can't get anything from him without everything done in triplicate. Even then there's a good chance that "red tape" will cause further delays.

20. **Tiny** - He's big. He's dumb. He doesn't talk much. He can carry a lot of equipment and is good to have around in a pinch. Equipment: a large gun.

21. **The Junior Officer** - Fresh from the Academy, he's all full of energy and new ideas. You better hope he listens to his sergeants before he comes up with some rash plan. Some newbies don't even have that much training, being a "3-month wonder" - an officer or NCO who was a civilian a short time ago and was rushed through a quick training program. He might turn out to be O.K. - if he survives.

22. **The Ambitious Colonel** - This steely-eyed officer with his eyes on the stars (general's stars) will achieve his objective at any cost - including the lives of all his men. Quote: "No retreat. Your orders are to hold to the last bullet."

23. **The Martinet** - A stiff, red-faced major who shouts a lot. The military is his life and his life is military. No matter how trivial a regulation, he will insist on complete compliance. Quote: "Everything by the book."

6. **The Runaway** - A pitiful boy or girl. Probably an orphan, they will attempt to attach themselves to a member of the party.

7. **The Addict** - This thin, wasted individual is desperately searching for a fix. Nothing else matters. May resort to violence if desperate.

8. **The Rebel Without a Cause** - This young man or woman is filled with vague discontent. Equipment: black clothes.

9. **The Hustler** - A street-smart hustler, always ready to make a bargain. Equipment: suspicious merchandise in trunk of car.

10. **The Slob** - He's crude, rude and lewd. Equipment: loud shirt and large quantity of messy food.

11. **The Bimbo** - A bleached blonde with few brains. She has the natural ability to zero in on characters with money and will extract as much as possible.

12. **The Escapee** - A edgy, dangerous fugitive from justice. The law is on his trail.

13. **The Brute** - A dimwitted mountain of muscle. Quote: "Duh, I tink he went dataway."

14. **The Ex-Con** - He's asking for a second chance, since he's paid his debt to society. But his past, in the form of scheming former associates or vengeful victims will come back to haunt him.

15. **The Informer** - This cowardly, rodent-like guy always has good info, but it'll cost you plenty.

16. **The Lunatic** - A mumbling, erratic nut case who sees things that aren't there and has some very odd ideas. Usually, he is insipid; sometimes, he is inspired.

17. **The Gambler** - A guy addicted to games of chance. He can't resist a bet, but he's also a card shark and grifter.

18. **The Dealer** - A sleazy purveyor of illicit items and activities. Equipment: long, dirty coat.

19. **The Traitor** - This person will befriend the party and then betray or tattle on them, especially if they've done him a favor.

24. **The Staff Officer** - His uniform is immaculate and he's rarely seen in a combat zone. Equipment: briefcaee with papers. Quote: "You're out of uniform, soldier."

25. **The Old General** - A pompous windbag who's still fighting the last war. He rarely leaves his luxurious headquarters. He has no hesitation about ordering thousands to their deaths in futile attacks. He's either incompetent, completely callous or a rabid warmonger. Too bad for the guys under his command.

26. **The Fighting Captain** - He's tough, carries his own rifle and is always calm under fire. He won't ask his men to do anything he wouldn't do, but then there are few things he won't do. Equipment: Sometimes wears a white hat.

27. **The Paranoid Officer** - He's hypercritical, has an haughty and abusive attitude, is a fanatic for details and harsh punishments, constantly complains of persecution and conspiracy, blames others for his mistakes, and demands absolute loyalty - but rarely gets it.

28. **The Bombastic Captain** - Arrogant and conceited, his bravery is not in question, just his brains. Quote: "Forward to glorious victory! Attack! Attack!"

29. **The Burnout** - He's seen too much combat; his haggard expression says it all. Substance abuse can be a problem.

Lowlife NPCs

1. **The Hobo** - A talented vagrant with a conscience. He has a urge to wander that causes him to move on periodically after doing someone a good turn.

2. **The Derelict** - A no-good, incoherent, stinking bum. Good for rumors when he's sober (about 20% of the time.)

3. **The Sleazy Salesman** - He enjoys preying on the elderly and poor, and is not beyond conning the party. Quote: "Can you afford not to have one of these babies?"

4. **The Panhandler** - A lazy street beggar, always looking for a handout. Equipment: sign that says "Will work for food," except that he won't.

5. **The Dropout** - He rejects society, work and regular bathing. Quote: "Hey, man, like...(rest of sentence)"

20. **The Phony Professional** - A shyster, a quack doctor or a guy with a piece of paper from a diploma mill, who's only out to make a quick buck.

Citizen NPCs

1. **The Activist** -This person is always vigorously promoting some cause. Equipment: clipboard with petition.

2. **The Tough Cleric** - Grew up on the mean streets. Now working in a higher cause. Very hard to fool.

3. **The Mystic** - A flaky individual with supposed psychic powers; forever going on about auras, crystals, star signs, etc.

4. **The Compassionate Cleric** - A real softie, always ready to lend a hand. Quote: "Can I help?"

5. **The Idiot** - A twitching, shrieking ninny. Stumbles into danger or causes chaos by accident. Quote: "Did I do that?"

6. **The Groupie** - obsessed with a "star". She talks about nothing else. Equipment: photos and souvenirs.

7. **The Motormouth** - You'll be sorry you met this one. They don't know when to shut up, and couldn't even if they did.

8. **The Housewife** - Bored with her dreary existence. Equipment: cigarette, housecoat, hair rollers.

9. **The Philandering Husband or Lothario** - Always brags about his conquests to male characters, and "comes on" to female ones.

10. **The Boy Scout** - Clean, reverent, loyal, brave, always prepared. Equipment: swiss army knife.

11. **The Wild Thang** - This girl is uncontrollable trouble, and she's probably underage. A car wreck is the usual result.

12. **The Flirt** - A tease who leads PCs on but isn't serious. Equipment: Big, jealous boyfriend.

13. **The Girl or Boy Next Door** - A fresh-faced, honest innocent. Equipment: White teeth.

14. **The Dingbat/Geezer** - An elderly woman/man whose ditziness is extreme. Quote: "What year did you say it was?"

15. **The Know-It-All** - A bigmouth who thinks he's got the answer to everything. Quote: "I told you so". Another version is The Big Talker - a friendly guy has always got some story - been there, done that, etc. But when it comes down to gatting real work done, that's all he can do - talk.

16. **The Jokester** - Constantly playing practical jokes, never serious. Someday he will go too far. Equipment: bucket of water over the door.

17. **The Sunday Driver** - This NPC is only found behind the wheel of a vehicle, and is usually a bewildered elderly or student driver. The result: an accident waiting to happen.

18. **The Hick** - A county bumpkin, easily recognizable by his backwoods accent. Very suspicious of "city slickers."

19. **The Artiste** - Poor (because he's too "sensitive" to work a regular job,) temperamental, creative, and erratic, the artiste suffers, as does anyone he comes in contact with.

20. **The Workaholic** - Their job is everything to this person. They talk of nothing else. They believe that anyone not 1000% dedicated to their work is a loafer. Quote: "Get a job, you beatnik."

21. **The Whiner** - All this nasally voiced flapjaw ever does is complain. Quote: "Shut the window, it's too cold!" A variant on The Whiner is the Martyr - one who's always suffering due to their sacrifices and lets you know about it. Quote: "You won't believe what I've been through." Another variant is the Nit-Picker/Critic - someone who can always find fault, no matter how trivial. Quote: "Well, maybe you saved the city from total destruction, but my petunias are wilting from the backlash."

22. **The Muscleman** - This obnoxious jock is more interested in himself than anything else. Equipment: dumbbells (best friends.)

23. **The Tough Guy** - Tacitum, always ready for a fight, the tough guy's an excellent hand-to-hand combatant. He usually doesn't start trouble, but he often ends it. Quote: "Do you have a problem?"

24. **The Nerd** - A wimpy guy with pocket calculator and thick glasses. He can usually solve any moderately difficult scientific problem.

25. **The Party Dude** - Noisy and tipsy. Likes to invite his friends over without asking. Quote: "Can I have some of your beer?"

26. **The Good Ole Boy** - A squinting redneck. Doesn't like anyone different from himself. Equipment: pickup with shotgun rack.

27. **The Professional Student** - Been in school forever, and avoids graduation at all costs. Equipment: textbooks

28. **The Husband-Hungry Female** - A conniving woman who will attempt to entice or entrap any eligible man into marriage. Equipment: tasty home-cooked food.

29, **The Whiz Kid** - A young genius. Typically irresponsible, and often gets into deep trouble.

30. **The Simpleton** - He seems normal, but a bit slow, and is profoundly naive. Sometimes people mistake his guilelessness for great depth of character.

31. **The Old Woman** - This elderly lady seems frail and polite, but she is actually quite observant, determined and sharp.

32. **The Battleaxe** - This old witch is a busybody with a bad temper. Equipment: a very heavy purse, which she uses as a weapon.

33. **The Dreamer/Misfit** - A starry-eyed youth with unreachable goals and little common sense. Another variant is The Visionary, whose goals are a little more reasonable.

34. **The Farmer** - Laconic, hard-working, and full of earthy wisdom. Equipment: agricultural implement.

35. **The Nosy Neighbor** - A local meddler who's always spying on the PCs. Quote: "What have you been up to today?"

36. **The Revolutionary** - A wild-eyed radical who's determined to overthrow something. Quote: "Down with the (insert institution of GM's choice)!"

37. **The Mechanic** - This grease-covered technical type can fix anything. Quote: "Let me take a look at it."

38. **The Beleaguered Parent** - A tired, distracted individual who is constantly hounded by his relatives and boss.

39. **The Paper-Shuffler** - A minor government official who can't see beyond his nose. He likes red tape. Quote: "It's against the rules."

40. **The Oblivious Obstacle** - A harmless innocent who is always in the wrong place at the wrong time and somehow thwarts or interferes with the PCs. If the party tries to harm the obstacle, some bizarre chance will cause them to hurt themselves instead.

41. **The Loudmouth Salesman** - This guy continually shouts about the qualities of his merchandise. Equipment: tacky suit.

42. **The Loner** - A quiet, seemingly strange individual who avoids all encounters. Despite his outward weirdness, he is actually an O.K. guy.

43. **The Skeptic** - This guy is extremely hard to convince. Quote: "I'll believe it when I see it with my own eyes."

44. **The Jinx** - The mere presence of this hapless person is enough to ruin any activity. Reduce die rolls accordingly.

45. **The Neighborhood Menace** - A kid who is constantly causing or getting into trouble. Equipment: slingshot and bike.

46. **The Buffoon** - A clumsy, clownish person whose answer to everything is brute force and stupid questions.

47. **The Zealot** - A wild-eyed religious fanatic. Equipment: sign saying "The End is Near."

48. **The Household Conniver** - A spouse whose dreams and schemes outweigh their common sense. They are forever getting mixed up with bogus deals and zany products.

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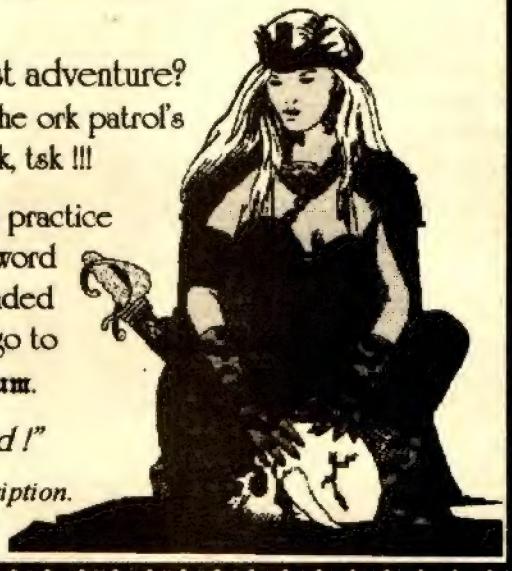

49. **The Psycho** - They seem normal - perhaps a kindly retiree, a gentle old lady, a angel-faced child, a mild-mannered hotel manager - but they're actually deadly maniacs. Equipment: sharp instrument, poison, etc.

50. **The Tightwad** - An annoying penny-pincher, whose main topic of conversation is how cheaply he is able to buy things and how much money he's saved.

Upper Crust NPCs

1. **The Hypocritical Cleric** - Preaches morality, but doesn't practice it. Equipment: fleet of limos.

2. **The Spoiled Brat** - A child of the wealthy, he throws tantrums when he can't get his way.

3. **The Bluenose** - This older woman or man is a narrow-minded interferer who is constantly vigilant against any sign of impropriety. Quote: "Well, I never!"

4. **The Socialite/Grand Dame** - An affluent woman whose life revolves around parties and gossip.

5. **The Playboy** - A handsome, debonair charmer who toys with people's affections.

6. **The Politico** - A fatcat, devious official who can talk out of both sides of his mouth at the same time. Quote: "My fellow citizens, I want to make one thing perfectly clear, and I give you my word, with firmness and resolve, to stand for liberty, truth, justice, mom and apple pie."

7. **The Celebrity** - A famous VIP with an attitude. Equipment: crowd of flunkies.

8. **The Rich Bitch** - This woman is a shrewd, immoral and conniving. Think of your favorite soap opera villainess, or maybe Leona Helmsley.

9. **The Absent-minded Professor** - This guy may be a genius, but he can't balance his checkbook. A sinister variant on the professor is the mad doctor. Quote: "They said I was mad! They said it couldn't be done! But I proved those fools wrong!"

10. **The Scrooge** - This wealthy cheapskate never misses an opportunity to make a buck. He despises charity and looks down on anyone with less money than himself (which includes just about everyone.)

11. **The Crashing Bore** - This empty-headed snob puts everyone to sleep with his tedious anecdotes.

12. **The Ruthless Tycoon** - He's too busy making money to pay attention to things like his family, friends or business ethics.

13. **The Powerbroker** - A behind-the-scenes dealmaker, he is influential in politics and business while remaining in the shadows of "greater" men.

14. **The Pompous Academic** - A overeducated windbag, unable to cope with the real world.

15. **The Suit** - An amoral government or corporate executive, who uses others to advance his unlimited ambitions. Quote: "Well, those kind of people are expendable."

16. **The Eccentric** - A very rich, and very weird person. He likes to manipulate people with the idea that they might get some of his money.

17. **The Distinguished Businessman** - A pillar of the community, he is a basically decent sort who may be conned or trapped into unwise actions by circumstances or devious companions.

18. **The Foolish Miser** - A wealthy, frail tightwad whose head is turned by any attractive woman who goes by.

19. **The Philanthropist** - A prosperous do-gooder who gives away scads of money for respectable causes. He likes to aasist the unlucky and downtrodden, but not those who resort to lies and trickery.

20. **The Big Bossman** - This guy's got his fingers in every pie and knows everything that's going on. He's the one who really makes all the decisions. ❑

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The Price To Pay

Facing Death in RPGs

By Todd Cumming © 1995 ❖ Art by Bob Hobbs © 1995

Suddenly Boris found himself standing in a dark room. Instinctively, he reached for his sword, only to find that it was no longer there. A man stepped from the darkness and walked around the bulky fighter, looking at him from every angle. Then he stopped, and stared Boris in the eye.

"Well, looks like you've done pretty well for yourself since we met."

Boris squinted at him. "You look familiar. Have we met?"

The man chuckled. "In a sense. You're the one who killed me..."

The majority of role playing games involve combat. Most of the time, this combat leads to somebody's death, usually the death of beings other than the players. Brutal, bloody fights can make an exciting adventure, but does anyone think about what happens afterwards?

There are a number of consequences which can occur after a person is killed in a role playing adventure. If the players kill a person who was simply a guard protecting some treasure or a powerful sorcerer, that person's death could be seen as an act of murder. Before the players know it, the local law-enforcement agencies could be breathing down their necks, asking some very difficult questions. If your campaign involves magic, drugs, or devices which can distinguish truth from lies, the players could be in deep trouble.

"So tell me, Boris. How does it feel to kill a man who may have had a family who depends on him, or a lover who needed him. Maybe he ran a local orphanage in his spare time, and now the children there are going hungry."

Boris rocked back and forth on his back, his hands covering his ears. "This can't be happening... you're dead, you can't come back..."

*The man lunged forward, his eyes flaring. "Yes, I **am** dead, and I **can't** come back. But you have never been able to forget what you did to me. You have **never** forgiven yourself for the atrocities you have committed."*

Another possible occurrence, if your campaign involves magic (or clones), is to have the victim come back from the dead to seek revenge on his or her killer. The obvious, and stereotypical way of doing this is for the un-deceased person to seek to kill the player. But it may actually be more interesting if the person haunted the player's dreams and memories, or turned the family of the player's character against him, or her. Revenge can be a variety of things, and not just limited to death. What if the player tried talking to a king, asking permission to hunt bad guys and collect their treasure, but a little voice inside the head of the king says not to trust him...

Every person has a family, and this can also be used in adventures to make players possibly feel guilty about what they have done, and to convince them to be a little more selective in the people they kill. Suppose the players just defeat a man who was guarding a large building. Just as he falls lifeless to the ground, a woman runs out of the building, sobbing and screaming. She kneels by the man, cradling his head in her lap and wiping away the blood. From the doorway, two dirty little children watch with teary eyes. The woman looks up at the players and cries, "You killed my husband, you evil people! He's dead- you killed him!" If the players don't do something to help support this family, they could be condemning the family to a life of poverty and an all-too-early death.

The players may also need to keep a good reputation up. How many towns would accept a group of people notorious for indiscriminate killing?

Boris rolled on the ground with his hands over his head, crying. His friends looked at each other in confusion. Fernandes nudged Inago and whispered, "What's wrong with him?"

With all this bloodshed, the character is bound to feel *something*, especially if he or she is supposed to be a good character. They could be constantly awakened by nightmares, seeing the people they have killed over and over in their minds, except each time the dreams get a little more gruesome and frightening. Eventually, they may not want to sleep at all. The player could also be haunted by the memories of what they have done, and remember the face of every person they killed just as they gave their last dying breath. While taking notes or writing something, the player is unable to concentrate on anything except the last words of the victims who had fallen under his weapon.

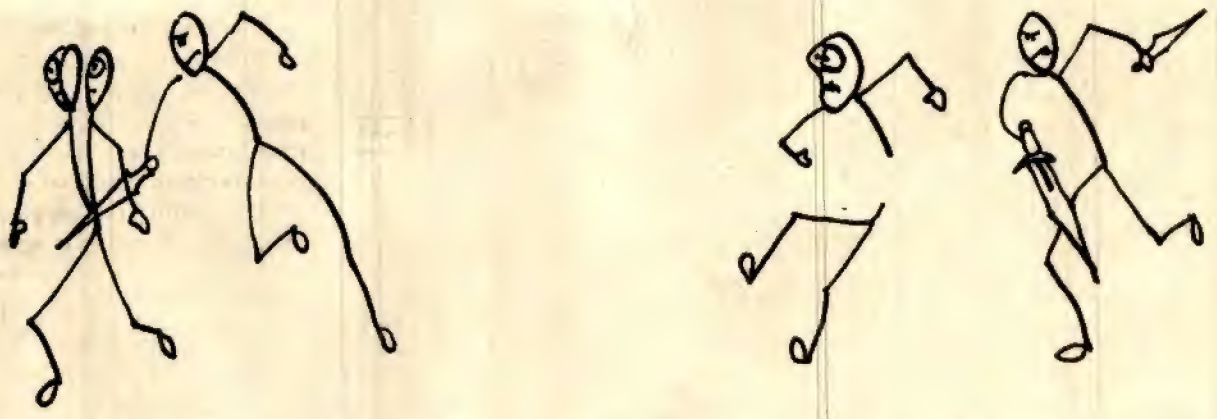
There are many ways to free a player from the burden of what they have done. From supporting a grieving family, to apologizing to undead spirits, to many other options only the GM could know. But the way to free the player's character from this should be personal and important, and may even shed a new light on how the player sees role playing games.

Boris looked up at the man, tears running down his face. "I'm sorry! I really am. I was just doing a job, and I wasn't thinking. Please ...I'm sorry..."

The man stared at the huddled form for a long time, then slowly nodded. "I accept your apology. It's all I was waiting for. But remember, I wasn't the one who forgave you. You've forgiven yourself."

Boris woke up to see his friends staring at him. Inago helped Boris to his feet. "Are you all right, Boris?"

Boris smiled at his friend. "Yes, I am now." ❑



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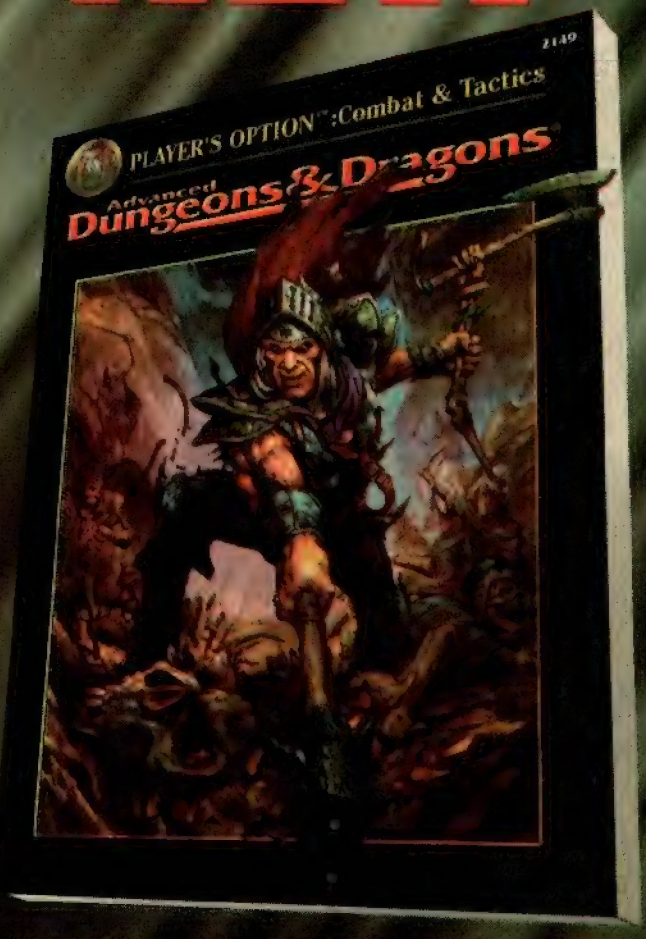

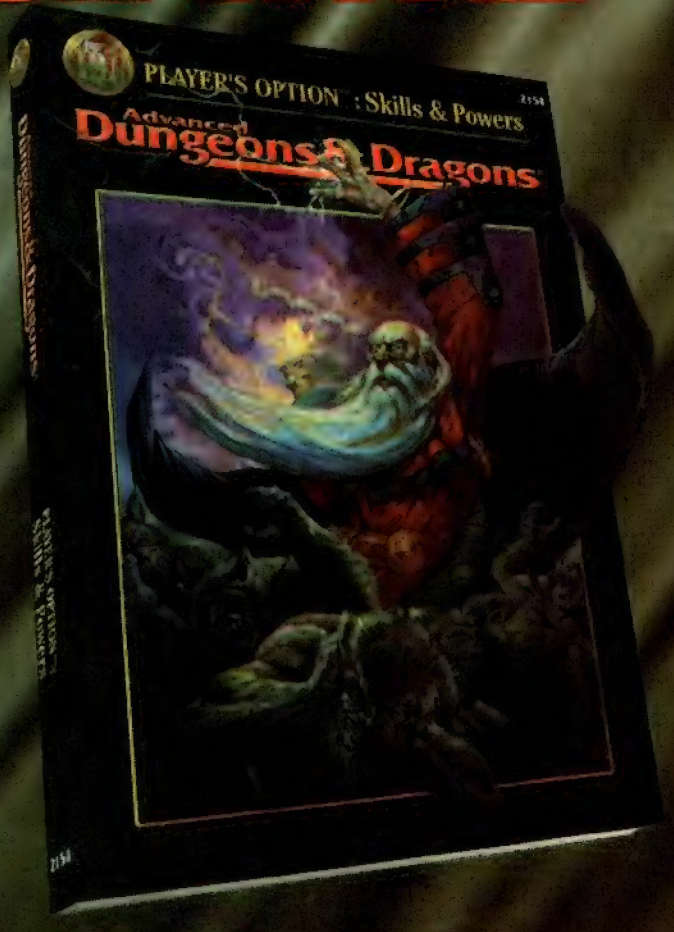

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Extras On Demand

NPC Templates for GURPS

By Brandon Cope © 1995 ❖ Art by Brad K. McDevitt © 1995

The primary strength of GURPS is the flexibility players have in creating the kind of characters they want. Unfortunately, this becomes a weakness when a GM must come up with an NPC on short notice. The random method on pp.84-85 of the Basic Set isn't good for creating a specific type of NPC and the 'Divine Fiat' method may create a non-player character that is either too strong or weak for his or her (or its...) intended role.

Many systems, such as **Star Wars** and **Shadowrun**, use templates for creating player characters. While the template method isn't quite appropriate for making GURPS PCs, it is well-suited for NPCs. By using a template, a game master has a bare-bones framework and a selection of tools to quickly build an NPC from.

The character types below were chosen based on frequency of encounter and detail required. For example, PCs run into shopkeepers all the time, but few merchants need to be described beyond their Merchant skill and a quirk or two. The templates list skills and equipment for three distinct type of genres: Fantasy, Modern and Space, unless the template is appropriate for only one genre. Most other genres can handled as a slight modification of one of these. (For example, 'low' cyberpunk is virtually identical to Modern.)

Template Advantages, Disadvantages and Skills

Each template has a list of advantages and disadvantages common to that type of character, as well as typical skills and their levels. For some templates, a particular advantage or disadvantage may be common enough that virtually all characters using that template have it. Such advan-

tages and disadvantages have a '*' after them, and have already been figured into the character's point total (and skill levels, if appropriate). GMs are encouraged to add and remove advantages, disadvantages and skills in order to create a template better suited for their particular campaigns.

Costs of suggested advantages and disadvantages are provided to speed up customization of a template. The suggested totals of advantages and disadvantages are listed under NOTES in each template, and the template's point total assumes the full values have been taken. If desired, additional skills may be randomly rolled using the table on p.85 **(or whatever — Rob)**, until all skill points have been spent.

Quirks

Since there are almost as many quirks as there are characters, any type of random quirk table would either be noticeably incomplete or ponderously long. Also, a good Fantasy quirk may be silly or unusable in a Space setting, and vice versa. Therefore, only the type of quirk is rolled for, with the GM filling in the details. Each NPC will have 1d-1 quirks. Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the type of quirk. The point total for each template does not include quirks.

Roll	Quirk Type
1:	Like
2:	Dislike
3:	Goal
4:	Belief
5-6:	Physical Habit

Cyberwear

None of the templates below include cyberwear, since it is extremely rare outside of the cyberpunk genre. However, if cyberwear is available, several of the templates below will likely make use of the technology. Many types of cyberwear (limbs, for example) could be found with any character type. Typical implants and attachments for specific templates are as follows:

Minstrel: elastic face, silver tongue, speakers

Police and Patrolmen: any combat-type

Scholar: eidetic and skill chips

Soldier and Space Marine: any combat-type, and maybe cortex bomb as well...

Thief: audio dampening

Thug: any combat-type (usually cheap and unreliable)

Tracker and Ranger: vision and hearing, airtight seal, gills

The Templates

Thief (Pickpocket or Burglar): 25 pts.

ST: 10 **DX:** 12 **IQ:** 10 **HT:** 10

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: Absolute Timing (5), Alertness +1 (5), Danger Sense (15), Intuition (15), Literate (10).

Disadvantages: Poverty: Struggling*, Status -1, Skinny (-5), Youth (-2 to -6), Cowardice (-10), Greed (-15), Kleptomania (-15), Overconfidence (-10)

Fantasy Skills: Climbing- 12, Escape- 11, Fast-Talk- 11, Lockpicking- 13 or Pickpocket- 13, Stealth- 14, Knife- 12.

Modern Skills: as above, but replace Knife with Guns (pistol)- 13, lower Stealth to 12, and add Electronics (Security Systems)- 12.

Space Skills: as Modern, but replace Guns with Beam Weapons.

Fantasy Equipment: two small knives, padded armor, lockpicks.

Modern Equipment: cheap handgun (.22, .32 or .38,) lockpicks.

Space Equipment: cheap laser pistol, sonic probe.

Notes: Take 15 points of advantages, 25 points of disadvantages and 7 points in skills. Not all thieves are armed, and smarter ones will try to run rather than fight. With slight modification, this template could also be used for spies.

Bravo or Thug: 65 pts.

ST: 13 **DX:** 13 **IQ:** 9 **HT:** 11

Basic Move: 6

Advantages: Toughness (10), Combat Reflexes (15), High Pain Threshold (10), Rapid Healing (5), Alertness +1 (5).

Disadvantages: Poverty: Struggling*, Bloodlust (-10), Bully (-10), Odious Personal Habit (-5), Impulsiveness (-10), Lecherousness (-15), Overconfidence (-10), Duty to Employer on 12- (-5).

Fantasy Skills: Broadsword or Spear- 14, Knife- 14, Shield- 14, Stealth- 12.

Modern Skills: Guns (pistol)- 16, Knife - 14, Stealth- 12.

Space Skills: Beam Weapons (lasers)- 16, Knife- 14, Stealth- 12.

Fantasy Equipment: spear or cheap broadsword, large knife, small shield, heavy leather armor.

Modern Equipment: cheap and small handgun, switchblade, leather or denim jacket (with gang colors and insignia, if appropriate.)

Space Equipment: cheap laser pistol, cheap vibroknife, light Kevlar vest.

Notes: Take 15 points of advantages, 40 points of disadvantages and 7 points in skills. Upgrade weaponry if employed by a wealthy patron (a rich merchant or a powerful drug lord, for example) or if a member of a major gang. Modern and Space Bravos optionally are -2 to ST but have 20 additional points for skills and advantages.

Guard or Police Officer: 55 pts.

ST: 11 **DX:** 12 **IQ:** 10 **HT:** 11

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: as Bravo, plus Legal Enforcement Powers (5 or 10).

Disadvantages: as Bravo, but Wealth is Average and some type of duty (Duty at 15 or less is assumed in the point total) is mandatory.

Fantasy Skills: Broadsword- 14 or Bow- 13 or Crossbow- 15, Spear- 13, Knife- 13, Spear or Knife Throwing- 12, Shield- 13, Area Knowledge (Beat)- 10.

Modern Skills: Guns (Pistol)- 15, Guns (Shotgun)- 14, Shortsword- 11 (for baton), Professional Skill: Security or Law Enforcement- 13, First Aid- 11, Area Knowledge (Beat)- 10.

Space Skills: replace both Guns skills with Beam Weapons- 16.

Fantasy Equipment: broadsword or longbow with 20 arrows or crossbow (ST 12) with 12 bolts, spear, large knife, heavy leather armor, pot helm, small shield.

Modern Equipment: M870 shotgun with 2 loads, .38 revolver or Beretta 92 with 5 clips, baton, uniform, Kevlar vest, first-aid kit, handcuffs.

Notes: Take 20 points in advantages, 30 points in disadvantages and 7 points in skills. Equipment can vary greatly, both by country and situation (a security guard at a donut shop will usually not be equipped with a shotgun and riot gear, for example.) Some guards are bribable, most are not. See GURPS Horror, p.99 for more information on bribery.

Soldier (light infantry/cavalry): 65 pts.

ST: 12 **DX:** 12 **IQ:** 10 **HT:** 11

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: as Bravo.

Disadvantages: as Bravo, plus a Duty to Army on 15-*.

Fantasy Skills: Spear- 14 or Broadsword- 14, Shield- 14, Riding- 12 or Running- 10, Knife- 12, Spear or Knife Throwing- 13.

Modern Skills: Guns (Rifle)- 15, Throwing- 12, Professional Skill: Soldier- 12, Gunner (Machine Gun or Rocket Launcher)- 13, Running- 10.

Space Skills: replace Guns with Beam Weapons.

Fantasy Equipment: spear or 4 javelins, large knife, small shield, outdoor basics.

Modern Equipment: M-16 (or appropriate assault rifle), light Kevlar vest, 2-3 grenades, large knife (bayonet), outdoor basics.

Space Equipment: blaster rifle or military X-ray laser, combat armor, 2-3 grenades, vibroblade.

Notes: Take 20 points in advantages, 15 points in disadvantages and 8 points in skills. As an option, modern/space soldiers have ST 11 but IQ 11. The equipment above is about the minimum; many soldiers will have heavier weapons and armor and most will carry additional non- combat gear. At least four of the eight skill points should go into the character's MOS (Military Occupational Specialty).

Space Marine: 85 pts.

ST: 12 **DX:** 12 **IQ:** 10 **HT:** 12

Basic Move: 6

Advantages: Alertness (5 per +1), Combat Reflexes (15), G-Experience (10), High Pain Threshold (15), Military Rank (5/level), Reputation (varies), Toughness (10 or 25).

Disadvantages: Extremely Hazardous Duty to Marines*, Bad Temper (-10), Code of Honor (varies), Overconfident (-10), Odious Personal Habits of all sorts.

Skills: Beam Weapons (Blaster)- 15, Beam Weapons (Laser)- 16, Electronic Ops (Sensors)- 10, First Aid- 10, Free Fall- 13, Knife- 13, PS: Marine- 11, Vacc Suit- 14.

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Equipment: Powered Combat Armor, X-ray military laser rifle, large vibroknife (bayonet), four concussion grenades, two blackout gas grenades and an Infantry Missile Launcher. Officers (Rank 3 and up) will also carry a sonic blade.

Notes: Take 20 points in Advantages, 20 points in disadvantages and 12 points in skills. Ten of these skill points should be in the marine's MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). Typical skills include Driving, Piloting, Gunner, and Electronics. Equipment will vary somewhat by nationality. The Space Marines are the ground arm of the Navy. They tend to be tough, crude and well-disciplined. See GURPS Space, p.17, for more details.

Space Patrolman: 51 pts.

ST: 9 **DX:** 11 **IQ:** 11 **HT:** 10

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: +1 Reputation*, Legal Enforcement Powers (5)*, Alertness (5 per +1), Combat Reflexes (15), Common Sense (10), Contacts (varies), Military Rank (5/level).

Disadvantages: Duty to Patrol (12 or less)*, Code of Honor (varies), Sense of Duty (varies), Honesty (-10).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Sector)- 12, Beam Weapons (Laser)- 14, Criminology- 11, Electronics Ops (Sensors)- 11, First Aid- 11, Judo- 11, Professional Skill: Law Enforcement- 12, Vacc Suit- 11.

Equipment: reflex armor, heavy laser pistol (with variable beam and recognition pad), small vibro-knife.

Notes: Take 20 points in advantages, 20 points in disadvantages and 4 points in skills. Also select any two of the following skills: Astrogation- 12, Bard- 12, Driving- 12, Gunnery- 12, Mechanic- 12, Piloting- 12, Stealth- 12, Streetwise- 12. Patrolmen are basically space cops, but usually have no authority planetside. See GURPS Space pp. 17-18 for more details.

Star Ranger: 80 pts

ST: 10 **DX:** 11 **IQ:** 11 **HT:** 11

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: +1 Reputation*, Legal Enforcement Powers (5 points)*, Alertness (5 per +1), Absolute Direction (5), Combat Reflexes (15), Common Sense (10), Contacts (varies), G-Experience (10), Military Rank (5/level).

Disadvantages: Duty to Rangers (15 or less)*, Code of Honor (varies), Sense of Duty (to Rangers, citizens or both), Honesty (-10), Overconfident (-10).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Sector)- 11, Beam Weapons (Laser)- 14, Criminology- 11, Electronics Ops (Sensors)- 11, First Aid- 12, Free Fall- 11, Knife- 12, PS: Law Enforcement- 11, Shortsword- 11, Survival (pick one)- 12, Survival (pick another)- 13, Tactics- 11, Vacc Suit- 12.

Equipment: exploration suit, laser pistol (with variable beam), laser rifle, small vibro-knife, vibro-machete (treat as short-sword).

Notes: Take 20 points in Advantages, 20 points in Disadvantages and 6 points in skills, plus four of the following skills: Driving- 12, Electronics- 11, Exoskeleton- 12, Mechanic- 12, Meteorology- 12, Piloting- 12, Stealth- 12, Streetwise- 12, Tracking- 12, Xenobiology- 11, Xenology- 11. A Star Ranger is a cross between a survivalist and sheriff. See GURPS Space p.18 for more details.

Tracker, Hunter, or Trapper: 65 pts.

ST: 11 **DX:** 11 **IQ:** 10 **HT:** 12

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: Absolute Direction (5), Animal Empathy (5), Immunity to Disease (10), Rapid Healing (5).

Disadvantages: Odious Personal Habits (varies), Primitive (-5/TL), Shyness (-5 to -15).

Fantasy Skills: Tracking- 13, Traps- 12, Bow- 11 or Crossbow- 13, Spear- 11, Knife- 11, Area Knowledge- 12, Naturalist- 13.

Modern Skills: Tracking- 13, Traps- 12, Guns (Rifle or Shotgun)- 14, Knife- 11, Area Knowledge- 12, Naturalist- 14.

Space Skills: as Modern, but change Guns to Beam Weapons.

Fantasy Equipment: longbow or crossbow (ST 11) with 20 arrows or bolts, large knife, spear, traps appropriate to prey, outdoor basics.

Modern Equipment: M1903A1 rifle or M870 shotgun with 5 loads, large knife, traps appropriate to prey, outdoor basics.

Space Equipment: laser rifle with 3 power cells, large vibroknife, outdoor basics.

Notes: Take 15 points of advantages, 30 points of disadvantages and 5 points in skills. Most trackers don't wear armor.

Sage or Scholar: 35 pts.

ST: 9 **DX:** 10 **IQ:** 12 **HT:** 10

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: Literate*, Language Talent (2 per +1), Mathematical Ability (10).

Disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness (-15), Age (-3/level), Bad Sight (-10/-25), Hard of Hearing (-10), Laziness (-10), Overconfident (-10), Stuttering (-10), Stubbornness (-5).

Skills (any): one mental/average skill at 16, one mental average skill at 14, and four mental/average skills at 12.

Equipment (any): common clothing, plus others as needed.

Notes: Take 10 points in advantages, 25 points in disadvantages and 6 points in skills. The sage's mental skills should be chosen from Language (p.54), Professional (p.58) and Scientific (p.59) skills, plus others such as Calligraphy, Writing, Naturalist, Area Knowledge, Politics, Strategy and Teaching. Also, most sages will use Optional Specialization (see p.43).

Jongleur (minstrel, bard): 45 pts.

ST: 10 **DX:** 11 **IQ:** 12 **HT:** 10

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: Voice (10), Charisma +1 (5), Literacy (10), Musical Ability (1 per +1).

Disadvantages: Wealth: Struggling*, Lecherousness (-15), Addiction (varies, usually Alcohol at -15).

Skills: Area Knowledge- 12, Bard- 15, History- 12, Musical Instrument (pick one)- 14 or Singing- 15, Musical Instrument (pick another)- 12 or Poetry- 13, Carousing- 13, Performance- 13, Knife- 11.

Equipment: musical instrument (lute, harp, guitar, etc.), common clothing, small knife.

Notes: Take 15 points of advantages, 40 points of disadvantages and 7 points in skills. A fantasy jongleur is more than just a singer and musician; he is also a traveling historian and gossip spreader, effectively a human newspaper. There is no true modern counterpart to the jongleur, though this template could be used for a modern singer or musician (remove the History skill.)

Hedge Wizard: 75 pts.

ST: 10 **DX:** 11 **IQ:** 12 **HT:** 11

Move: 5

Advantages: Magery*, Animal Empathy (5), Literacy (10), Reputation +1 (5).

Disadvantages: Wealth: Struggling*, Sense of Duty to Village (-10), Absent-Mindedness (-15), Age (-3/level), Pacifism: Self-Defense Only (-15), Combat Paralysis (-10).

Skills: Veterinary- 12, First Aid- 12, Naturalist- 13, Agronomy- 12.

Spells:

Option I: Beast Soother- 13, Master- 12, Beast Speech- 13, Test Food- 12, Seek Plant- 12, Identify Plant- 12, Heal Plant- 12.

Option Ia: Shape Plant- 13, Bless Plants- 12, Plant Growth- 12, Wither Plant- 12, Mammal Control- 13, Bird Control- 12, Insect Control- 12.

Option II: Seek Earth- 12, Purify Air- 12, Ignite Fire- 12, Seek Water- 12, Find Weakness- 13, Weaken- 13, Restore- 12.

Option IIa: Clean- 12, Rejoin- 13, Shape Earth- 12, Reshape- 13, Earth to Stone- 12, Purify Water- 12, Create Water- 12.

Option III: Lend Health- 12, Minor Healing- 13, Major Healing- 11, Apportation- 12, Lighten Burden- 12, Missile Shield- 12, Light- 12.

Option IV: Tell Time- 12, Alarm- 12, Find Direction- 12, Detect Magic- 12, Aura- 13, Measurement- 12, Sense Life- 13.

Equipment: knife, old robes and boots, two 2-point powerstones.

Notes: Take 15 points of advantages, 30 points of disadvantages, one of the spell options and 10 points in skills. Note that Option I requires the Animal Empathy advantage or additional prerequisites. Also, option Ia or IIa may only be chosen if option I or II (respectively) has been chosen first, since the former options build on the latter ones. Each spell option is worth 20 points. Most hedge wizards don't have combat spells or skills, but there are always exceptions!

War Wizard: 100 pts.

ST: 11 **DX:** 12 **IQ:** 13 **HT:** 11

Basic Move: 5

Advantages: Magery*, Literate (10), Combat Reflexes (15).

Disadvantages: Duty (Varies), Overconfidence (-10), Bully (-10).

Skills: one Average weapon at skill- 13, another at skill- 12 or an Easy weapon at skill- 13, Riding- 12, Spell Throwing- 14.

Spells:

Option I: Stone Missile- 15, Create Earth- 12, Earth to Stone- 12, Shape Earth- 12, Seek Earth- 12.

Option II: Fireball- 15, Create Fire- 12, Shape Fire- 12, Ignite Fire- 12, Heat- 12.

Option III: Itch- 12, Spasm- 12, Pain- 13, Stun- 13, Strike Dumb- 13, Fatigue- 13.

Option IV: Fear- 12, Sense Emotion- 12, Sense Foes- 12, Terror- 13, Berserker- 13, Foolishness- 12, Daze- 13.

Option V: Sense Life- 12, Purify Air- 12, Test Food- 12, Lend Strength- 12, Recover Strength- 15.

Option VI: Simple Illusion- 12, Light- 12, Haste- 12, Apportation- 12, Wallwalker- 13, Poltergeist- 13, Levitation- 13.

Equipment: one medium melee weapon (sword or spear), large knife, heavy leather armor, two 3-point powerstones.

Notes: Take 15 point in advantages, 40 points in disadvantages, 8 points in skills or spells and two spell options (worth 10 points each). Taking a spell option twice gives a +1 to each spell level. War Wizards, either serving with an army or working as mercenaries, try to strike a balance between physical and magical attack capabilities. ❑

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Zine Scene

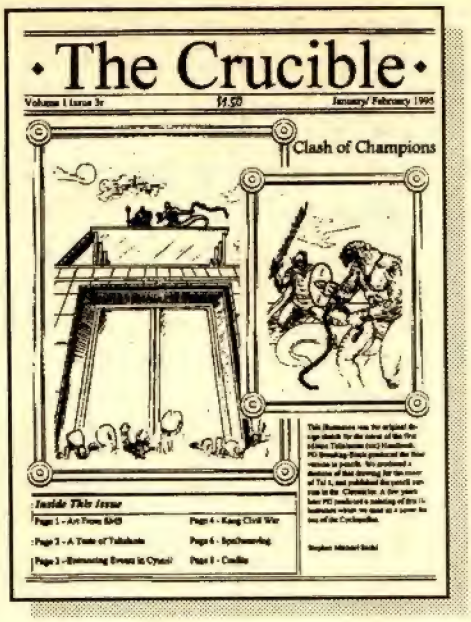
The World of Small Press

By Mitch Michaelson

The next SHADIS special issue is on Small Press, so if you like Zine Scene, you'll get a lot more to peruse. Not only will I present ten worthy zines for your consideration, but it looks as if we'll have quite a bit more material for you. I'll be submitting two articles, one on how technology influences small press, and another that's a lexicon of small press terminology - from APA to zine. Jolly said he may have an article or two, as well as some from other well-known magazine writers.

By the way, I should mention that **Morningstar Rising** is ceasing production soon. Current subscribers will get all the issues they paid for, even more in fact, but we aren't accepting new subscriptions or advertisements. If you have any questions, please write to me at the address below. I may have a new project in the works. If it comes to fruition, Zine Scene readers will be first to know.

This issue of Zine Scene, I've brought together three "zines" that are printed like newspapers. The Gamer's Connection has been overviewed before, but it's significantly different from the previous version. If you change the style of your zine drastically, it may merit a new overview, so write to me at the usual address: PO Box 642026, Omaha, NE 68164. ❑



The Crucible

Publisher, Editor: Loyal G. Parsons
Frequency: Bi-monthly

Talislanta has been sold from *Wizards of the Coast* to *Daedalus Games*, who also produce the roleplaying game **Nexus: The Infinite City.** I believe the only fanzine for the Talislanta line is **The Crucible.**

The Crucible began as a free, tiny, four-page newsletter announcing the licensing of Talislanta. The third issue was eight pages, and I hope its growth will be constant. The writing is commendable, and the layout superb.

Knowing little about the Talislantan landscape, I can't explain the material much; I can't tell the difference between an Arimite and a Cymrilian. The "Kang Civil War" article was an insight to a roleplaying session from the GM's perspective. It was fairly useful, with specific suggestions taken from experience. Both of Stephen Michael Sechi's bits, on the Stryx and the Ahazu, were entertaining, but not filling, since they were so short.

You have no idea how many times I've seen such humble beginnings blossom into fantastic magazines. Fanzines that focus on one game are frequently very good! Watching one grow from a diminutive newsletter to a full-fledged magazine is a big part of the joy of fanzines. The Crucible is off to a remarkable start. Get in on what could become a great magazine now. Write to The Crucible, c/o Loyal G. Parsons, PO Box 4039, Irvine, CA 92716.

Re: Quests!

Publisher: Mensa
Coordinator: Mary H. Kelly
Frequency: Quarterly

This digest-sized gaming fanzine is produced by Mensa, the high-IQ organization. Now on issue #37, it's mainly a Special Interest Group discussion forum. The majority of each issue is composed of letters between members. The Letters column is full of people writing back and forth to one another, and the Magic Mouth Discussion Forum is for people to respond to specific themes or topics.

If this sounds familiar, it's because this is how online services work. Services like America Online and CompuServe have bulletin boards (like SHADIS's in AOL's Game Company Support: Publications area), in which you can post messages, ask questions, or rant about whatever you feel like. Most of **Re: Quests!** is exactly like that, minus the "flame wars."

The open Letters section is something you have to get into over time, like walking into the middle of a conversation. One started with, "Alan Clark: Stoneskin? Arghkk. Insects: don't you just love 'em?" On the other hand, the Magic Mouth section is more organized and enjoyable to read.

About a quarter of Re: Quests! is composed of short articles on roleplaying. Some are Adventure Starters, spells, silly monsters, strange fiction, and occasionally a game review. You can contact them by snailmail at: Re: Quests!, c/o Mary H. Kelly, 4030 Valley View Lane #233, Farmers Branch, TX 75244-5029, or at 70656.1151@compuserve.com.

The Gamer's Connection

WELCOME RUNDRACON ATTENDEES

Small Press Association Unveiled

STAR WARS BY THE BAY

Abyss Addition

The Gamer's Connection

Publisher: Gold Rush Games
Editor: Mark Arsenault
Frequency: Quarterly

I'm biased. I've known Mark Arsenault, the editor of **The Gamer's Connection,** for a few years now, we both write for SHADIS, and I've written for TGC. But even if I never heard of him, I would still print an overview of TGC.

In content and policy, I find The Gamer's Connection to be one of the best all-around roleplaying fanzines on the market. It's high time that TGC gets recognized, rather than the same ones that get nominated every year for the Origins Best Amateur Gaming Magazine.

TGC has a wealth of different articles, from reviews to original RPG material. The writing and editing have steadily improved over the years, as has the excellent layout. The industry news is unparalleled! Unlike some major magazines, who put only a few entries in their column, one of which is always their own production schedule, I've seen TGC put out a news column with several *dozen* tidbits and a list of 75 conventions!

Issue 22 of TGC heralds the entrance of the "new" TGC. It used to be 20 normal-sized pages, but now it's 16 tabloid-sized pages, an increase of 60%. It's also jumped up to 2,000 copies. TGC stands out as one of the best-rounded zines on the market. Subscribe by writing to: The Gamer's Connection, PO Box 2531, Elk Grove, CA 95759-2531.

CONS UNLIMITED

Wizards of the Coast to Acquire Andon Unlimited

Inside!

Cons Unlimited

Publisher: Andon Unlimited
Editor: Gary E. Smith
Frequency: Quarterly

Cons Unlimited is probably the biggest game newspaper, with 20 tabloid-sized pages and a distribution of 15,000. The magazine is essentially free, since *Andon* hands it out at its conventions and other conventions can ask for it. You can also subscribe to it if you can't get to a con.

Here's the big picture: Andon Unlimited is a convention management company. They produce game conventions across the US, including the GAMA Trade Show, Origins, and AndCon - some of the biggest. Recently, they were purchased by *Wizards of the Coast*, so we can expect them to be hosting more cons, and those they currently manage should be even more extravagant.

Their newspaper is, of course, mainly about conventions. Unlike other magazines that only spare a back page for convention listings, Cons Unlimited is all about cons. They have announcements, rating forms, classifieds, a game club listing, and even entire pre-registration listings. You can find out how to volunteer at Origins, what cons are located near you, and how to go to cons on a budget.

I trust Cons Unlimited to keep an eye on the subject of game conventions for me. A periodical that focuses on conventions is necessary. Fortunately, Cons Unlimited does it better than anybody. Write to them at: Cons Unlimited, PO Box 1740, Renton, WA 98057-1740.

Entertainment Exchange

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1995 INTRODUCTORY AD RATES

Entertainment Exchange

Publisher: Asay Publishing
Editor: Ben Rodriguez
Frequency: Monthly

This newspaper is fresh on the stands and in the mailboxes. **Entertainment Exchange** is an "advertising forum" for games, comics, japanimation and cards. It doesn't have articles on how to improve your gamemastering or reviews of new products, only advertising. (I should mention it has a small cover price and subscription rate.)

You can place classifieds in the Entertainment Exchange if you're looking to buy, sell or trade. There were about a dozen comic classifieds and seven classifieds for adventure games in the latest issue. Most of the newspaper is commercial advertising, though. I would prefer more game entries to thumb through. However, my local game store manager pointed out that I've never lived in a rural area, so the commercial advertising is a desperately-needed means to get games.

Unlike mail order catalogs, you get a wider variety of outlets in Entertainment Exchange. Several of the advertising retailers use toll-free 800 numbers, some have electronic Bulletin Board Systems you can dial up, and all include their addresses of course.

For retail stores with a mail order side, Entertainment Exchange is probably one of the few venues to get your name out. With a distribution of 7,500, they have a wider audience than most fanzines. Get a hold of them at: Entertainment Exchange, PO Box 670, Joplin, MO 64802-0670.

GAME MASTER'S WORKSHOP

Hook, Line, and Sinker™

Adventures on the Fly!

The Dwarf's Chest

Hook: While drinking in a tavern, eating in a restaurant, or shopping for vegetables, the party is approached by a dwarf (or gnome who looks exactly like Shad) mob boss and his two ogre body guards.

Line: The dwarf wants the party to pull a small job for him. He explains that a local church or temple stole an ornate golden chest from him and he wants them to retrieve it. The chest has magical healing powers and he needs it very soon to heal his sick old aunt. He's embarrassed to say that his boys have tried to get it back but failed, because of their limited magical resources. The party, on the other hand, should have to no trouble getting the magic chest. The pay he offers is mediocre and he's vague about details.

Sinker: If the party turns him down, the dwarf will have his boys kidnap one of their number (or an NPC member if you don't want to deal with splitting the players). They are informed that the character will be killed if the chest isn't recovered within two days.

If the players go after the chest, they'll find it on the altar of the main chapel, looking like easy pickin's. It's trapped with an alarm and all sorts of magic. With a minimum of detective work, the party will learn that the church did indeed steal the chest from the dwarf, claiming that their god told them to. If the players try to rescue their friend and ask about the dwarf's hideout, they should find out the information only after a long and frustrating search.

If a player character is the kidnapping victim, have fun with this. The two ogres that will watch him or her are pushovers. They can be tricked into giving the character a chance to escape. When the attempt is made, they will try to apprehend the character, but will go out of their way not to hurt him or her.

Frank Merenda

Grumpy Old Staff

Hook: During the booty phase of an adventure, the party finds an old, weather-beaten, wooden staff along with the rest of the treasure.

Line: As soon as one of the characters makes physical contact with the staff, a senile old man will begin talking in his/her head. His voice grates on the nerves, he's grumpy, he talks too much and most of what he says is nonsense. In a roundabout sort of way, the old man explains that he was once a wizard who was trapped in the staff by an evil necromancer. He's been like this for hundreds...or dozens...or maybe just a few- years; he's not quite sure.

Sinker: He insists that the character avenge him by killing the evil necromancer and finding a way of releasing him from the staff. By now, the character realizes that a bond has been formed beween him/her and it. He/she must stay in contact with the staff, or experience severe pain and possible damage. The old wizard will constantly harass the character until he/she agrees to make things right, then he'll just talk constantly and complain about nothing. He has a couple of old spells that he likes to use, but when cast, they usually fail or go terribly wrong. Curse removals and similar spells will have no effect on the staff.

Frank Merenda

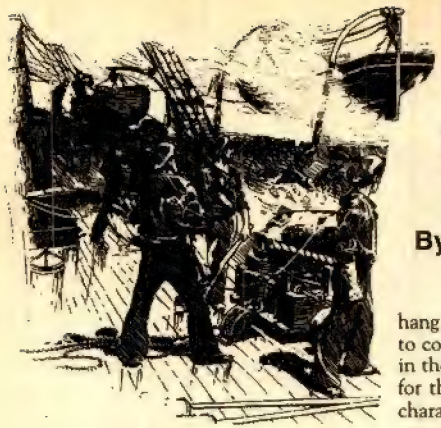
Mirror, Mirror...

Hook: The PCs find a dirt-encrusted object during their adventures - it has a faint magical aura if detected for. The character who claims it and cleans it off will find it is an exceptionally well-crafted bronze mirror - quite a work of art.

Line: A few days later, the character's relections starts to behave in odd ways: sometimes they will see movement in a reflective surface. Occasionally they will look into a shiny surface and for a few seconds their reflection will not be there. This continues for a couple of days at random. Then their reflection totally misbehaves by starting to back chat them: a word or two at first, and then complete sentences, correcting their behavior and questioning their decisions, becoming a back-seat driver, so to speak.

Sinker: By this time the character has probably linked the problems to the mirror (or if they have sold it to anyone, this person will probably be after them). The mirror animates reflections, giving them a life of their own, but they can still only exist in shiny surfaces. It can only do this to one reflection at a time, and if the surface of the mirror is once again made dirty the magic slowly wanes and the PCs reflection goes back to normal. However, breaking the mirror is not advisable, as two pieces of can both animate a reflection (think of Mickey and the broomsticks...). As long as the mirror maintains a reflective surface, no matter how small, it can animate the reflection. However, it is not malevolent - the reflection could choose to be helpful as well as annoying (warning the character of possible attacks, for example.)

Tonia Walden ❑



The Flag Bridge

Sailing the Waters of Play-By-Mail Games

By Joey Browning, U.S. Editor, Flagship Magazine © 1995

Last issue I promised you some previews of some of the newer games out there, so, as they're a bit long, I'll get to it forthwith:

Odyssey - A First Look

Odyssey is the third offering from *Gamer's Den*, and from advance indications, it looks to be the one with the widest appeal. At the current time, the game has not been released commercially - it's in the final turns of its stage II playtest, but as the rules have firmed up nicely and the program bugs become almost nonexistent, I would expect games to open up for the general public within a couple of months at most. Odyssey is best described as a fantasy power game, and is most closely related in flavor and scope to **Legends** (if one must make such a comparison). It is designed to accommodate the ability to create multiple modules, so that while the basic rules structure stays the same, the game world, victory conditions, troop types, spells, and items can radically change. Thus, if one likes the basic system, there's an inherent replayability built into the game. The first (playtest) module is called **Hero's Quest,** and is a basic free-for-all power game with no pre-built alliances or factions. You can ally with others in the game, but there are no formal factions to join. Victory is contingent on controlling a certain number of important cities and guilds - something that looks likely to take more than a few turns! Thus, while the game is technically closed-ended, its length is such that it can almost be treated as open-ended while one gets the hang of the system. Players have the ability to control a fairly large number of "pieces" in the game - pieces being a catch-all term for the actual units that are manipulated: characters, parties, armies, population centers, and guilds. All of these things (except guilds) may be purchased during the game setup phase, and more may be recruited, conquered, or influenced during the course of the game.

Characters and Parties

While characters are in many ways the focal point of the game, they do *not* have to be the player's primary units. Armies and Population Centers may all carry out orders completely independent of characters, including their owning characters. The makeup of a character is controlled by a host of statistics. There are of course the race and sex of the character, the former being limited by the particular module one is playing in. Hero's Quest (HQ from here on out) gives one a lot of leeway in this, with no fewer than nine different races to choose from, each with their own base statistics. Each character must choose a class, or profession from the list allowed by the module. These professions are typical fantasy ones such as Fighter, Scout, and Warlock. For the expenditure of some additional setup points, characters may be dual classed, and receive the appropriate name: a Warlock/Priest combination is known as a Justicar, while a Druid/Commander is called a Warden, for example. Triple classes are possible (e.g. the Warlord is a Commander/Fighter/Scout), but cannot be chosen on setup. Next comes the inevitable list of numbers, in this case divided into four sections : Abilities, Attributes, Affinities, and Other. Attributes range in value from 1-100, and are the basic physical and mental makeup of the character, such as strength, intellect, and luck. Attributes range from 0-10,000 and may best be described as broad areas of knowledge, such as arcane, leadership, and tactics. Affinities range from -10,000 to +10,000, and govern the characters ties with the magical influences of the world : thermal, force, and toxin for example. Finally, all the other relevant numerical stats are grouped into Other - defense levels, hit points, number of actions allowed, glory and prestige gained, etc. To complete the character definition, there are spaces for possessions (equipped or unequipped), a familiar, special titles gained, and any magical or special status that may be held (clairvoyant for example, or spectre). Note that all of these numerical stats can and will increase during the game, either as a result of actions taken or by the direct application of experience points to the score in question. All characters must be in a party at all times. The party may itself be inside of an army, guild or population center, but it must exist as a separate entity. Parties only have Affinities and combat modifiers as stats, and these are typically only used in the event of hostile actions of some type. Players are limited in the total number of parties and characters that they may control at any one time, but this number is typically fairly large (20 of each are allowed in HQ).

Armies

Up to 20 army command may be controlled at any one time as well, not including garrisons (a special non-moving army command that is fixed to a particular population center). The actual troop types available are fixed by the module, but in any event they have almost as wide a range of stats as do the characters. There are 23 separate statistics for each troop type, including such things as ranged hit probability, survivability, movement rate, and melee defense. Characters may train troops from population centers (if they are of the correct class and experience) or summon troops magically (wind gliders, skeletons, and the like), and some population centers have the ability to produce certain troop types on their own - including some the player didn't know about initially! There is

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for arranging your troops on the field of battle, as well as for special contingencies that may occur during the battle. All things considered, there's plenty here to keep the average armchair general happy for several hours each turn.

Population Centers and Guilds

Population Centers range in size from tiny hamlets to huge capitals, and defenses may range from none at all to mighty citadels. Depending on size, each population center has a certain number of actions it may perform each turn, ranging from growth to commerce to regional scouting. All population centers have a guard rating (*i.e.* how hard it is to perform covert actions such as theft or sabotage against it) and Affinities ratings, to determine how susceptible it is to magical influences. Further, each is rated for wealth, morale, recruiting ability, divinity worshipped, primary racial components, gold in treasury, and several other factors. Owning population centers are very important, as they provide not only gold and military recruits for your position, but also glory (and thus, prestige) for the owning character. Guilds are entities that are contained within population centers that have specific functions and power levels. Guilds perform specific functions (for those that can afford their fees!) such as religious conversions or resurrections (for Church guilds) to the teaching of new spells (for Arcane guilds). Guilds tend to be rare and powerful, and are items to be coveted by players!

In addition to all of the above, there are huge numbers of things I haven't yet touched on - special markers scattered about that provide quests, or rewards (or penalties to the unwary!), or the ever-present monster dens, where deadly creatures guard great treasures - perhaps. Items of all sorts will show up that need to be investigated, and there are extended missions and subplots available for the players to follow up on. I won't go into details on those - this is just a first look, after all, and so we'll save the rest for the full review that is to follow the commercial release of the game.

Gamer's Den plans to run Odyssey strictly via electronic mail, but, for those folks with no e-mail access, not to worry: licenses are already in place with *Llucky Llama* to run postal-only versions of the game. It's important to note that there won't be a mix of e-mail and postal players in the same game (as this is seen as giving the e-mail players too big an advantage, what with their quicker inter-communication). There's also a host of nifty features available in the game mechanics, such as getting archived turns sent to an ally, or posting broadcast messages to all. As of this writing, I'm not sure that a turn fee has been fixed in stone, but rumor has it that it will be around $5.50 or so for up to 200 orders per turn - quite economical, compared to some power games on the market. Note that this is for the e-mail game - there's probably a good chance the postal game will be a bit more to cover postage and printing costs - but then, turns will only run half as often too. I'd urge anyone interested to drop Gamer's Den a line via e-mail at Internet: `support@den.com` or CompuServe: 73613,3472.

Traveller - The New Era : Forging of an Empire

Eclipse Entertainment's new PBM offering **"Traveller, The New Era : Forging of an Empire"** is based on the latest incarnation of the popular and quite durable **Traveller** RPG from *Game Designers' Workshop*. The rules and presentations are very, very faithful to the RPG rules themselves - insofar as the game isn't an RPG at all, but a closed-ended "control the star cluster" game. All the components of Traveller are there, from the technology, including sandcasters and meson guns, to the planetary statistics, to the dreaded Virus itself. The basic premise to the game is that, in 4634 AD, the mighty Third Imperium was wracked with interstellar war. During the ensuing thirteen years of strife, a unique cellular/crystalline lifeform was developed, capable of taking over and subverting similar crystalline structures - such as the controlling arrays used by virtually every computer system in existence. Unfortunately, the Virus had an unintended effect - if it took over a sufficiently powerful computer, it was capable of attaining sentiency. Needless to say, the Virus spread like the, er, plague, and the entire Third Imperium collapsed; the Virus continued to split, grown, and mutate into myriad "strains". One such strain was labeled the "Empire Builder", because of its desire to build and expand its holdings. One such strain took control of a large fleet of support and auxiliary ships. Desiring to find a safe haven from which to grow, it happened upon an ancient alien ruin that provided it with a way to build jump drives with ranges theretofore unheard of. Constructing such drives, it jumped to a small cluster of rich worlds outside the normal plane of the ecliptic of our galaxy, and began to settle the habitable systems with the personnel of the fleet. At some point after these colonies were established, the Virus disappeared, for reasons unknown - which brings us to the present. You are one of 25 worlds in the cluster that has reached a sufficient tech level to think about expanding and taking control of the fragmented worlds of the cluster. To obtain victory, a player must control a certain percentage of the systems in the cluster - the percentage being dependent on the number of allies that are attempting to declare victory. In addition, the mysterious, hidden Virus Prime Base must also be subjugated - not an easy task, from the hints in the rules. To do this, the player has all of the standard tools of galactic overlords everywhere. Each turn, players may build items ranging from warships to mining platforms to planetary defenses to troops. Additionally, they may invest money in their planets' infrastructure to increase production or update old factories, and may invest in R&D as well. Once built, ships may then sally forth to explore, trade, colonize, or fight as you see fit. All the while, the critical industrial expansion and R&D must be occurring behind the scenes.

The Tools of Commerce

There are a number of non-military vessels and structures that can be built, some of which are vital to your position's future success. Not all of these are initially known - for example, you don't know how to build Colony Ships at the start of the game. Even so, there are still a number of worthwhile projects to contemplate. Mining Platforms are critical, as your biggest limiting resource is not manufacturing capability, but raw materials. The typical RM output of your starting world is barely sufficient to build a single destroyer per turn. Putting a few Mining Platforms with able commanders into an asteroid belt, however, can easily quintuple your RM production, or more. Cargo ships are also quite useful for trade with any NPC planets you happen upon - and trade can be quite lucrative indeed. Also not to be neglected is your planetary infrastructure - a steady increase here means more Mega Credits for research and material, as well as a larger production capacity and an up-to-date industrial base.

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The Tools of War

Of course, there are the usual wide array of warships to be built, and as you do more research, you'll discover even bigger and better ones. You are allowed to outfit the ships with equipment as you see fit - for example, a destroyer can carry 200 "spaces" of equipment. This would allow you to outfit it with 2 lasers and 2 sandcasters for example, or perhaps a missile launcher and two meson guns, or even maneuvering thrusters, ECM, armor, and 15 additional marine quarters should you plan on using it to board enemy vessels - the choices are completely yours. It's lots of fun to fiddle with various designs - while the process is clean and uncomplicated, you can spend hours doing what-ifs. Meson guns are highly accurate and have unbelievable penetration, but are short-ranged and only do fair damage, while lasers are long ranged and accurate, but aren't too good at penetration or damage...and so on. Additionally, there are a huge variety of planetary troops types to build: infantry, armor, air defense batteries, CAS aircraft, etc. Each are used should you invade another's planet or - heaven forbid - be invaded yourself. Finally, there are the system defenses such as missile platforms and orbital defense satellites to construct - cheap and expendable, but not highly effective except in large numbers. Of course, you never have enough in the way of resources to build everything you want, so it's always a balancing act, trying to outguess your opponent. Putting meson shields on all your ships won't do you much good if your enemy is going heavily into particle accelerators and lasers, for example - yet your ships just aren't big enough to cover all the bases and still have an effective design. Decisions, decisions...

The Tools of Science

R&D is often enshrined as the heart of any strategic space game. This is somewhat true of Traveller, but not to such an extent as other games - in Traveller, increases tend to be more incremental in nature, rather than completely dramatic. Still, it is very important not to neglect this area. One curious rule is that, even after attaining a R&D breakthrough to the next tech level, you can't build anything of that TL until all of the industry on the planet in question is updated and retooled. Thus, it's quite possible to have the know-how to build, say, TL13 ECM units, but to be unable to build them, as your planetary industrial base is still stuck at TL12 - something that can be remedied only by more investments in infrastructure. The actual mechanics of R&D are pretty simple - you spend as many Mega Credits (MCr) as you wish, then sit back and see what the scientists produce. Oh, you do have a bit of leeway here - you can prioritize the different areas of research : Computers, Engines, Hulls, Planetology, Weaponry, Ground Troops, & Shielding, but even so R&D is a hit-and-miss affair. R&D may also be assisted by having your ships perform salvage missions, to look for lost or abandoned equipment that may be held over from when the Virus fleet first arrived in the cluster.

The Game Mechanics

Each turn, the players are allowed to issue 10 orders plus 1 order for every system they control. Interestingly enough, there is no limit to the number of standing orders that may be run at any time - so pretty soon you find yourself with more standing orders running than you have specific orders to issue. It is highly desirable to pretty much run your empire with standing orders, and use specific orders to either establish more standing orders or to handle fleet movement and exploration details . Turn reports are quite hefty and replete with excellent illustrations, including a map of all charted systems each turn. Text reports are in very small font typically, but well laid-out and quite clear. Turnaround time is about 2 weeks, and orders may be faxed in or E-mailed for free or phoned in for an extra $2.00 charge. The only drawback is that turn fees are a bit steep, ranging from $8.75 for up to 15 orders possible (*not* issued - if you can issue the orders, you get charged for it, but standing orders are free), and increasing from there, maxing out at $13.00 for 36+ orders.

Conclusions

All-in-all, a sound game, and so far, quite enjoyable, if a bit pricey. My ratings are Anticipation = 8, GM = 8, Depth = 8, Interaction = 7, Value = 5. To contact Eclipse Entertainment, write to them at PO Box 28397, Tempe, AZ, 85285, or phone/fax (602) 496-9204. Their E-mail address is `eclipse@primenet.com`. Rules and setup for new players are free - afterward, additional rules are $3.00 each. ❑

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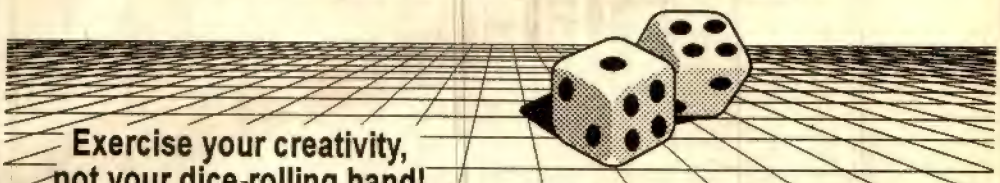

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If your game store does not have TableMaster, send check or money order for $25 (Mass. residents add 5% tax) plus $3 shipping. Specify 5.25" or 3.5" discs.

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Bits 'n' Pieces

Rumors, New Products, and Other Cool Stuff.

By Mark Arsenault © 1995

Welcome, once again, to Bits and Pieces, SHADIS Magazine's wonderfully evocative industry news column. As our long time readers know, reading this column each issue can bring you good fortune, increase your constitution, and protect you from the temptations of investing one's life savings in collectible cards of all types. All right, maybe I'm exaggerating, but you will find yourself with a bit more knowledge of happenings in the gaming industry than most non-readers.

With that said, let's leap into this month's news!

Morningstar Setting

Mitch Michaelson, editor of the small press 'zine **Morningstar Rising**, and SHADIS' own Small Press Editor, recently announced the dissolution of his gaming mag. "The organization of Morningstar Rising will be officially 'dissolved by operation of law' June 2nd." Mitch tells me that he will only be sending the final issues of MSR to existing subscribers (making them rare collectibles indeed.) Mitch has not announced any official plans for future products, although he has expressed an interest in writing for several other small press 'zines. Well, Mitch, if nothing else, you'll be able to enjoy the convention season without fretting over MSR deadlines!

I have enjoyed several issues of Morningstar Rising in the past year or so. As I did when Mitch started MSR, I wish him the best of luck in whatever endeavors he may embark on in the future. And so, the sun sets on another small press 'zine...

Artists Needed

The Journal of The Brittanic Technological Society (the 'zine devoted to such Victorian-era games as **Space:1889, Cthulhu by Gaslight** and **Castle Falkenstein**) is planning a "Steampunk Goes To The Beach!" issue for later this summer. In addition, TJBTS is actively seeking artists to do illustrations for the swimsuit insert.

"What we're looking for," said a Journal rep, "are Victorian era characters from any Steampunk Genre game in period swimwear enjoying a day at the beach." I'm told that the situation can be as serious (Cthulhu about to seize a comely young lass sunning herself) or as comical (a group of characters piling out of a steam-driven woody wagon, surfboards at the ready and heading for the water) as you'd like.

"Just about anything goes save for blatant pornography. Since we plan to distribute this world-wide, this can be the perfect chance for the undiscovered artist to get his or her work out into the public eye." For further details, contact TJBTS via the internet at **drgnshd@aol.com** and tell them Bits & Pieces sent you!

Goodbye Honesdale, Hello Lake Geneva!

Word has it that *West End Games* staffer - and all around friendly sales guy - Bill Olmesdahl is moving on. Bill left WEG this past May 30th for an editorial position with *TSR, Inc.*

Another familiar name joining TSR is *Pariah Press's* own Mike Nystul. Mike joined the TSR team on May 30th. "I will be going to work for TSR Incorporated as part of their Design department," Mike said. "For this reason, my wife Dawn will be taking the role of Production Manager on the same day. Dawn will be doing a lot of the things I used to because I will be contractually obligated not to do them any more." Fans of **Whispering Vault** should fear not. Pariah Press has already laid out its schedule for new WV products through next summer.

Product Delays

Changeling, *White Wolf's* latest game in the *Storyteller* series, was delayed a short bit recently. "It was originally going to be an end-of-June release," said Jennifer Hartshorn at WW, "and we just moved it a week or so to an early July release." Assuming the product stays on schedule, you should see it very soon, perhaps even by the time you read this column.

Pariah Press announced an extensive delay in the production of their new role-playing game, **Crusade**. "I hoped to release the game at GenCon," said Pariah Press head muckymuck, Mike Nystul, "but it has been put on hold until sometime next year because I will not be able to write it. I have done the basic design and worldbuilding, but Dawn will be hiring other designers and authors to finish the game. I know that the delay will disappoint a lot of people but that is the way it has to be."

Do-It-Yourself Pubs

World Builder Publishing, the folks responsible for **The World Builder** magazine, recently announced the release of a handy guidebook for would-be small press mag publishers. The pamphlet, titled "Creating Your Own Small Press Publication," can be obtained for just $10 direct from World Builder Publishing, P.O. Box 7196, Bonney Lake WA 98390-0932. E-mail Ty Belknap at **WorldBuild@aol.com** for more information.

SimCity Is Out!

SimCity: The Card Game is out at last! The game, officially licensed to *Mayfair Games, Inc.* by *Maxis*, should be in the hands of retailers as you read this. As some of you may know, there was a special SHADIS Magazine promotional card produced for the game (packaged with issue #17.5), as well as special promo cards including cards for *Crazy Egor's*, *Berkeley Games* and *Game Shop News*. A new round of promo cards will be produced soon, including a special *Gold Rush Games* card that will be available in an upcoming issue of **The Gamer's Connection!** In addition, Mayfair's Faith Price tells me that the unlimited edition of SimCity is currently slated for an August release.

Aeshia PBM

Brass Dragon Games announced the release of **Aeshia**, the most recent campaign addition to their PBM simulation **Conquest**. In the world of Aeshia, players work towards building a nation, whether of barbarians, elves, dwarves, devotees or hordes of humanoids and other nasties. Like the original Conquest game, it is human moderated. Setup is a reasonable $15, which includes a 30 page rulebook, and the first two turns. For more information, contact Brass Dragon Games, 272 Plattsburg Ave., Burlington VT 05401; or call (802) 863-1770.

White Wolf Gobbles Gray Mouser

White Wolf Publishing announced the acquisition of Fritz Leiber's "Lankhmar: Fafrhd and the Gray Mouser" series. Through negotiations with *Richard Curtis & Associates*, White Wolf will be re-relasing the entire fantasy classic in a newly packaged, newly compiled arrangement of three hardback books beginning this fall. In addition to the three book collection, there will be an anthology containing original stories based on the Lankhmar setting.

New FUDGE On The Horizon

Just a note for all you **FUDGE** fans: Steffan O'Sullivan's back at work on the FUDGE system. "He's got some ideas for improving the combat system, and has rewritten bits of the entire book to make everything smoother," says *Grey Ghost Press* rep Ann Dupuis. "There are new optional rules going into the Addenda (including a "diceless FUDGE" section) and other cool stuff!"

This is all in preparation for the "official" printing of the FUDGE book in June/July - "the one that'll have all the bells and whistles for sale through the retail market to those poor folks who don't have Internet access and can't get this great game system for free!" As with the Limited Edition FUDGE book published last year, this book will be illustrated with copyright-free clip art, and can be copied and distributed legally (in accordance with the Legal Notice, of course.)

Backing A New Look

After reviewing customer comments, *Wizards of the Coast, Inc.* has decided to change all card backs in the newly named **Vampire: The Eternal Struggle™ (V:TES) Deckmaster™** game. When the game - formerly titled **Jyhad™** - debuts this summer, the cards will have the game's snake "biohazard" symbol and the new name on a green marble background. The old card backs featured the word "Jyhad" on green marble.

"Changing the card backs doesn't affect how the game is played. Although you'll be able to see the back of the tail card in your opponent's hand and the top vampire in the crypt, you won't know what the cards are," says Matthew Burke, V:TES Project Coordinator. "Changing the card backs doesn't make Jyhad cards obsolete."

Besides changing the card backs, Wizards of the Coast is also adjusting the game's rules. "We rewrote and reformatted the rules for easier reading," says Burke. "We also have added new variant rules to increase the pace of the game for those who want to play quick sessions." The new version of the rules will appear in instructions that accompany each V:TES starter deck and also in a new player's guide, **Darkness Unveiled.** The guide is due out this September.

One month prior to that, the game's first expansion set, **Dark Sovereigns,** will be released. "More than 100 cards will make up this expansion," according to a recent press release, "which explores the rich myths and folklore of vampires in Europe. The set will also introduce players to new vampires and new categories of vampires."

White Wolf To Distribute Whispering Vault

In an agreement between *Pariah Press* and *White Wolf Game Studio*, the latter will be the sole distributor of the **Whispering Vault,** Pariah Press' flagship role-playing game. New Pariah Press products will carry the White Wolf Distribution logo to indicate that their sale and distribution is a joint venture between the companies. "White Wolf assumes no ownership rights of any Pariah Press properties or ideas," Mike Nystul said, "but provides a an effective means for their wide-scale sale and distribution. We believe that this arrangement will get the game to the audience it deserves." Here's hoping so.

Online Update

Last issue we printed a listing of game companies and reps that you could reach via the internet. The list was a bit dated, so we are printing an updated version for you. Those e-mail addresses without extensions such as "@crl.com" are America Online screen names. If you are sending e-mail via the internet, simply add "@aol.com" to the end of the name. For example, MDGrau becomes MDGrau@aol.com.

Apex Publications - Matthew Grau (MDGrau)
Atlas Games - John Nephew (AtlasGames)
Atlas Games - Peter Hentges (AGPeter)
Backstage Press - David Berkman (bckstage@crl.com)
Black Dragon Press - Colin Murcray (BDPress)
Black Gate Publishing - Brandon Blackmoor (BBlackmoor)
Blacksburg Tactical Research Center - Greg Porter (BTRC)
Chaosium - Sam Shirley (Chaosium)
Chameleon Eclectic - Corwin Carson (CEEGames)
Columbia Games - Craig Besinque (CBesinque)
Crunchy Frog Enterprises - Paul Lidberg (FrogGod)
Daedalus Games - J. Garcia (jgarcia@io.org)
Dead Earth Productions - (DeadUrth)
Decipher Games - Ross Campbell (DCustServe)
Dream Pod 9 - Jean Carrieres (mordred@coffeehaus.com)
Escape Ventures, Inc. - (evpa@genie.geis.com)
Event Horizon Publications - (EHPGames)
FASA Corporation - Tom Dowd (FASA Tom)
FASA Corporation - Lou Prosperi (FASA Lou)
FASA Corporation - Bryan Nystul (FASA Bryan)
FASA Corporation - Mike Mulvihill (FASA Mike)
Fat Messiah Games - Neal Sofge (NealS)
Flying Buffalo Inc. - (FBInc)
Game Designers' Workshop - Loren Wiseman (GDWGames)
Games Workshop U.S. - Jim Kitchen (Exarch)
Gold Rush Games - Mark Arsenault (TGCEditor)
Goldtree Enterprises - Luke Ahearn (Iron Mule)
Grey Ghost Games - Ann Dupuis (GhostGames)
Hero Games - Steve Peterson (HeroGames)
Hogshead Publishing - James Wallis (james@hogshead.demon.co.uk)
Iron Crown Enterprises - Bruce Neidlinger (Naug)
Kenzer & Company - David Kenzer (david_kenzer@msmail.wes.mot.com)
Knight Games Ltd. - Charles Taylor (Cybrwere)
Last Unicorn Games - Christian Moore (Monomyth)
Leading Edge Games- Jay Adan (LEGames or leading.edge@genie.geis.com)
Lucky Llama Games - (llucky@crl.com)
Marquee Press- Joe & Kathi Williams (MarqueePrs)
Mayfair Games - Darwin Bromley (Mayfair)
Metropolis Ltd. - Terry Amthor (Lictor)
Nightshift Games - Paul Lidberg (FrogGod)
Omni Gaming Products (Torg) - Shawn Metcalf (DeadBoy101)
Pagan Publishing - John Tynes (Pagan Pub)
Pariah Press - Mike Nystul, Pres. (PariahMike)
Peregrine Games - (peregrin@io.org)
R. Talsorian Games - Mike McDonald (Talsorian)
Ragnarok Enterprises - Dave Nalle (RagnarokGC)
Sage Lore Productions - Michael Hopcroft (Scribe@world-locally.org)
SIMTAC, Inc - Steve Dinsmore (Dins)
Soldiers and Swords Games - Pete Kofira (SSG Games)
Stellar Games Inc.- Lee Cerny (Stellar LC)
Steve Jackson Games - Chris McCubbin (Cwm fnord)
Steve Jackson Games - Steve Jackson (sj@io.com)
Storm Press - Dave Pilurs (StormPrss)
Task Force Games - Tim Olsen (TFG1)
The Armory - Andy Rayman (Arm East)
Tri Tac Systems - Richard Tucholka (Tucholka)
TSR - Rob Repp (TSRInc)
Ultimate Games, Inc. - Dave Long (DaveLong)
Visionary Publishing - Mitchell J. Gross (VisionaryG)
West End Games - Greg Farshtey (WEGGF)
White Wolf Studios - Jennifer Hartshorn (MadWeaver)
Wizards of the Coast - J.D. Wiker (WotC2)
Wizards of the Coast - Peter Adkison (mavra@wizards.com)
Xanadu Games - Jason/Tina Andrew (Xanadu1876)

Below are the e-mail addresses to a few gaming publications.

Adventures Unlimited - Nicole Lindroos Frein (AdvsUnltd)
Australian Realms - Nick Leaning (nicklean@perth.dialix.oz.au)
Canticle - Christian Moore (Monomyth)
Challenge Magazine - Loren Wiseman (GDWGames)
Cryptych Magazine - (cryptych@wizards.com)
d8 Magazine - Joe Cirillo (JOEd8)
Dragon Magazine/"Rumblings" - Wolfgang Bauer (TSRMags)
The Familiar - Roger Carden (GameBuddah)
The Gamer's Connection - Mark Arsenault (TGCEditor)
Interactive Fantasy - James Wallis (james@hogshead.demon.co.uk)
The Journal of the Britannic Technological Society (Starbizr)
Pyramid - Scott Haring (PyramidEd)
Scribe E-zine - Michael Hopcroft (Scribe@world-locally.org)
SHADIS - Jolly R. Blackburn (JollyGood)
The Unspeakable Oath - John Tynes (Pagan Pub)
The World Builder - Ty Belknap (Worldbuild)

Good gaming, all, and I'll see you here in 60 days! ❑

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★ ***PROMO CARDS*** **(at game and card conventions).**
Selected conventions during 1995 will receive a limited supply, of promotional cards you won't find in the **Player Decks** or the **Slim Deck Boosters.** If you're planning on going to a con this summer, ask if they'll have **Super Deck** promo cards!

★ ***TOURNAMENTS*** **(July and August 1995).**
Plan on playing in the **Super Deck!** *Super Tournament* at Origins 95 in Philadelphia July 13-16, and in Milwaukee, August 10-13 with $1,000 prizes, free promo cards, and more.

Card Sharks

Up My Sleeve

The World of Card Games

Edited by David Williams

RAGE: A Review

by D.J. Trindle

I've been waiting for this game for months. Last February, when Dark Forest Games offered to take me along on a trip to see **RAGE** (then in late playtest) demonstrated, I jumped at the chance.

After the munchies and opening remarks, we were all given prebuilt decks. A double-sided piece of 8 ½″ by 11″ paper held the rules and the turn order sheet; we read them over and started playing. At the end of the evening, as we were swapping postmortems and congratulating Dave Williams, the inevitable victor, the consensus was that the game was a winner.

When the final version was released in May, I jumped on it. Aside from the obvious changes in production, and the occasional fixed card text, the game was remarkably similar to the one I'd played in Berkeley's warehouse. There are three kinds of cards: Characters (e.g. werewolves), which start the game in play; Sept cards, which represent your pack's resources; and Combat cards, which (mostly) deal damage to opposing people, creatures, and giant multinational corporations.

The card layout is functional, if unexciting. Character cards are double-sided, with representations of the shapeshifters in breed (human or wolf) form on one side and Crinos (werewolf) form on the other. Those sept cards which can enhance your werewolves, and the combat cards which mark damage to your wolves, are designed to fit under the character cards in a "T" shape, hiding the art. This is often not a bad thing: while some of the art is very good indeed, most of it is merely serviceable and some pieces are awfully cartoony.

RAGE is very much a combat-oriented game. The goal is to acquire Renown equivalent to your pack's starting Renown: this usually means killing off a pile of enemies or rivals. You can therefore vary the length of the game by agreeing to more or less powerful packs, as well as building in an obvious handicapping system should it be necessary. (Often, it's possible to win the game solely by picking off rival werewolves: this seems darkly similar to the parent RPG, where the Garou often bicker among themselves to the exclusion of fighting the real enemies.) Although there are political elements to the game, they tend to be combat-related as well. This is, of course, totally appropriate to the genre: RAGE isn't **Jyhad** any more than **Werewolf: the Apocalypse** is **Vampire: the Masquerade.**

The big innovation is that all players take their turns simultaneously. This makes the game function equally well as a two-player duel or a multi-player brawl. Enemy cards, when attacked, have their defense handled by one of your opponents, so there are few times when anybody is sitting around doing nothing for a long time. If two people wish to defend for the same enemy, it's resolved the same way timing conflicts are — with Rock-Scissors-Paper. Thanks to the simultaneity and some clever design in the combat system, the game is generally quick to play.

The combat system does, however, have a flaw. If I damage your werewolf in combat, I place my combat card under your werewolf. If I kill your werewolf, I place his card in my victory pile. The constant swapping of cards requires eternal vigilance or a pile of markers for each player — and even so, I've managed to lose a couple cards already.

RAGE's other major problem has to be its editing. There are some important errors on the cards themselves (the most infamous example: A *Klaive* does aggravated damage, but the card lost that text somewhere on the way to the printer), and the rulebook is full of holes. Nag your Net-connected buddy to get you the Frequently Asked Questions list, which fixes almost all of the problems and is very nearly a requirement to play the game. Apparently the players' guide, **Savage Attack,** is due out soon; it is rumored have a revised and vastly improved version of the rules. I can't recommend it blindly, but it will, at the very least, likely be a good investment for those without a net connection.

The game is quite balanced: although first-turn kills are being discussed online, they're theoretical exercises rather than unbeatable decks. There are a variety of decks available to construct: although combat is the primary theme of most of them, your methods may vary. While broken cards exist, they are few. The ultra-rare foil "chase" cards—there is approximately one per box—are probably technically broken, as most are way overpowered, but they're illegal in tournament play and can therefore probably be banned in friendly play without too many hard feelings. (And if everybody's got one or two, they're a lot of fun.) To sum up: RAGE is one of the better card games on the market, with a flavor and mechanics which are unique to it and whose flaws do not make it unplayable. How can you ask for more? ❑

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The Independent Games Magazine

RAGE

A Collector's Checklist for White Wolf's Werewolf CCG.

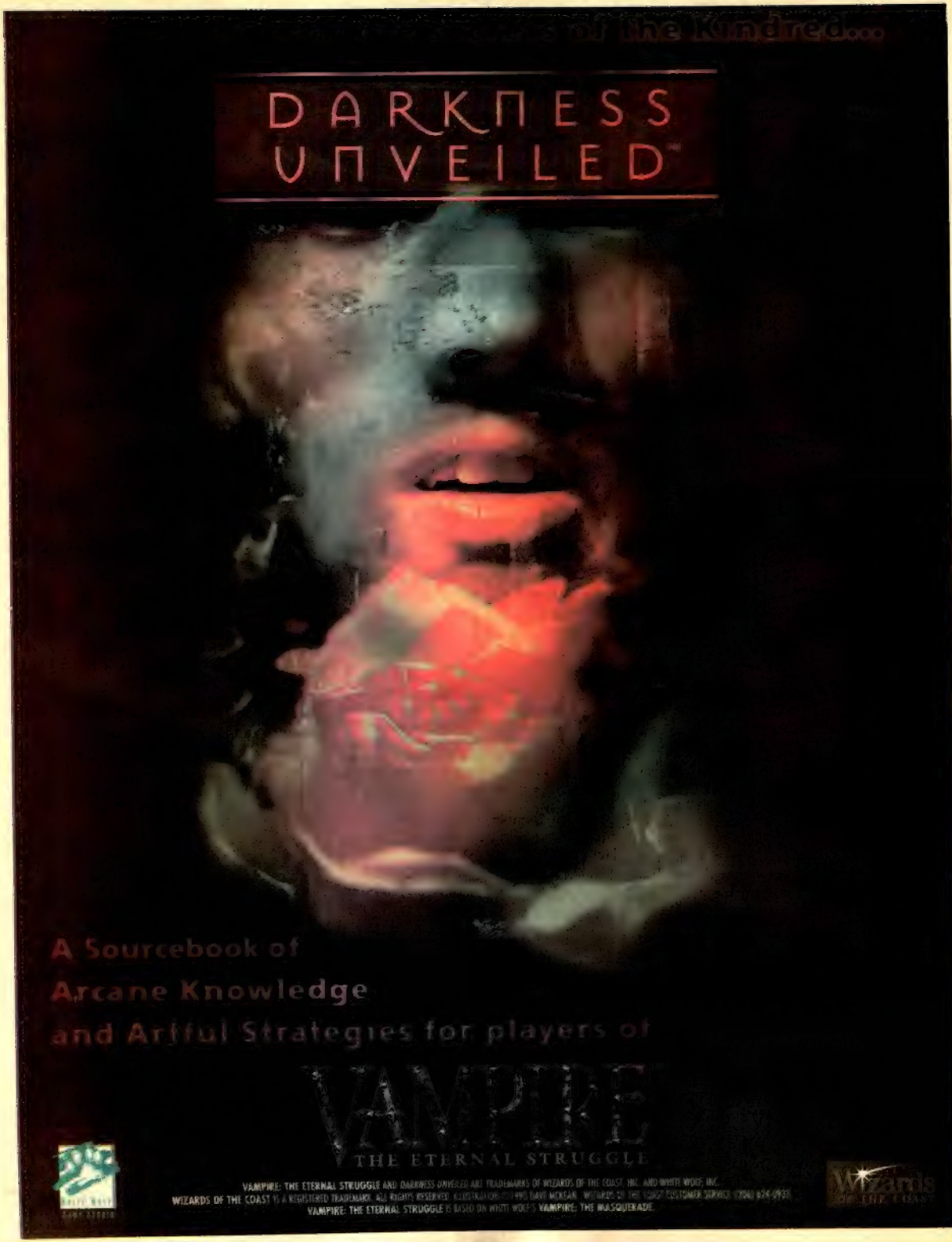
Card	Type	Freq.
❑ Shape Shift	Action	C
❑ Sneak Attack	Action	U
❑ Taunt	Action	U
❑ Faerie Kin	Ally	R
❑ Flame Spirit	Ally	U
❑ Gaffling Pest	Ally	C
❑ Gangrel Ally	Ally	R
❑ Great Bison	Ally	R
❑ Kinfolk-Small Town Cop	Ally	R
❑ Kinfolk-Soldier of Fortune	Ally	R
❑ Kinfolk-TV Reporter	Ally	R
❑ Kinfolk-Veterinarian	Ally	R
❑ Kinfolk-Environ. Activist	Ally	R
❑ Wolf Kinfolk	Ally	C
❑ Wolf Spirit	Ally	C
❑ Wyrm Slayer, Ronin Garou	Ally	R
❑ Attacking the Wyrm	Combat	C
❑ Bite	Combat	C
❑ Block and Strike	Combat	U
❑ Block	Combat	C
❑ Body Blow	Combat	C
❑ Broken Limb	Combat	C
❑ Bum Rush	Combat	U
❑ Careful Strike	Combat	U
❑ Critical Blow	Combat	R
❑ Disarm	Combat	U
❑ Disembowelment	Combat	R
❑ Dodge	Combat	C
❑ Dry Gulch	Combat	U
❑ Entrail Rend	Combat	R
❑ Evade and Strike	Combat	R
❑ Evasion	Combat	R
❑ Eyes Gouged	Combat	U
❑ Fast Strike	Combat	R
❑ Feint	Combat	U
❑ Flesh Wound	Combat	C
❑ Forceful Wind	Combat	R
❑ Frenzy	Combat	U
❑ Fur Gnarl	Combat	U
❑ Glancing Blow	Combat	C
❑ Grazing Wound	Combat	C
❑ Head Wound	Combat	U
❑ Hunting Party	Combat	U
❑ Kneecapper	Combat	C
❑ Lucky Blow	Combat	R
❑ Mangle	Combat	R
❑ Massive Wound	Combat	R
❑ Nerve Cluster	Combat	U
❑ No Escape	Combat	U
❑ Offbalanced Attack	Combat	C
❑ Organ Puncture	Combat	U
❑ Overextended Attack	Combat	C
❑ Pack Defense	Combat	U
❑ Rend and Tear	Combat	U
❑ Run Like Hell	Combat	U
❑ Shield Mate	Combat	U
❑ Solid Blow	Combat	C
❑ Spine Crushed	Combat	R
❑ Stinging Wound	Combat	C
❑ Surprise Ally	Combat	R
❑ Surprise Attack	Combat	R
❑ Swipe	Combat	C
❑ Taking the Death Blow	Combat	R
❑ Telling Blow	Combat	U
❑ Umbral Escape	Combat	R
❑ Vital Blow	Combat	U
❑ Black Spiral Dancer	Enemy	U
❑ Deranged Mokolé	Enemy	R
❑ Elder Vampire	Enemy	R
❑ Fomori	Enemy	C
❑ Fomori	Enemy	C
❑ Furmling	Enemy	C
❑ Hogling	Enemy	C
❑ Pentex Forestry Team	Enemy	U
❑ Pentex Refinery	Enemy	R
❑ The Piper	Enemy	R
❑ Progenitor Mage	Enemy	R
❑ Pumpkin Man	Enemy	U
❑ Samuel Haight	Enemy	R
❑ Silhouette	Enemy	R
❑ Uktena Wyrmfoe	Enemy	R
❑ .38 Special	Equip.	C
❑ 9mm Semi-Auto Pistol	Equip.	U
❑ Bane Arrow	Equip.	U
❑ Bones of Shakir Hind	Equip.	R
❑ Bottlecap of Shakey Mac	Equip.	R
❑ Elder Stone	Equip.	U
❑ Fang Dagger	Equip.	R
❑ Fang Necklace of Fenris	Equip.	R
❑ Feather of the Phoenix	Equip.	R
❑ Flak Jacket	Equip.	C
❑ Flower of Aphrodite	Equip.	R
❑ Grand Klaive	Equip.	R
❑ Incarna Sigil	Equip.	R
❑ Klaive	Equip.	R
❑ Luna's Links	Equip.	R
❑ Mokolé Hide	Equip.	R
❑ Moon Sign	Equip.	R
❑ Naturae Boon	Equip.	U
❑ Portable Computer	Equip.	R
❑ Sands of Sleep	Equip.	R
❑ Shotgun	Equip.	R
❑ Silver Ammo	Equip.	R
❑ Spear of Deceit	Equip.	R
❑ War Paint of Wahya Ohni	Equip.	R
❑ Wyrm Skin	Equip.	R
❑ Alaskan Wolf Hunt	Event	R
❑ Chimera	Event	U
❑ Cockroach	Event	U
❑ Crescent Moon	Event	C
❑ Drunken Revelry	Event	R
❑ Entrapment	Event	U
❑ Falcon	Event	U
❑ Fenris	Event	U
❑ Full Moon	Event	C
❑ Garbage Food Poisioning	Event	R
❑ Gibbous Moon	Event	C
❑ Grandfather Thunder	Event	U
❑ Griffin	Event	U
❑ Half Moon	Event	C
❑ Harano Gloom	Event	R
❑ Inbred Disorder	Event	R
❑ Journey Onward	Event	R
❑ Journey to the East	Event	R
❑ Leadership Challenge	Event	R
❑ Lost Calling	Event	R
❑ Lunar Eclipse	Event	R
❑ Matriarch Mourning	Event	R
❑ New Moon	Event	C
❑ Owl	Event	U
❑ Peace of Nature	Event	R
❑ Pegasus	Event	U
❑ Ragnarok	Event	R
❑ Rat	Event	U
❑ Reclaiming the Stolen	Event	C
❑ Scouring the Wyrm	Event	C
❑ Scouting Mission	Event	R
❑ Stag	Event	U
❑ Uktena	Event	U
❑ Umbral Quest	Event	C
❑ Unicorn	Event	U
❑ Wendigo	Event	U
❑ Wyrm Taint	Event	R
❑ Alias	Gift	R
❑ Aura of Confidence	Gift	U
❑ Awe	Gift	U
❑ Balor's Gaze	Gift	R
❑ Battle Song	Gift	C
❑ Beast Mind	Gift	U

❑ Blissful Ignorance	Gift	C
❑ Body Wrack	Gift	R
❑ Burrow	Gift	C
❑ Camouflage	Gift	U
❑ Cat Feet	Gift	U
❑ Circular Attack	Gift	R
❑ Command Spirit	Gift	U
❑ Coup De Grace	Gift	R
❑ Curse of Hatred	Gift	U
❑ Distractions	Gift	U
❑ Exorcism	Gift	C
❑ Eye of the Cobra	Gift	U
❑ Fenris Bite	Gift	R
❑ Gaia's Vengeance	Gift	R
❑ Geas	Gift	U
❑ Gift of Porcupine	Gift	C
❑ Glib Tongue	Gift	R
❑ Greater Banishment	Gift	R
❑ Heart of Fury	Gift	U
❑ Icy Chill of Despair	Gift	U
❑ Insightful Eyes	Gift	C
❑ Jam Technology	Gift	U
❑ Knife Wind	Gift	R
❑ Lesser Banishment	Gift	C
❑ Luna's Armor	Gift	U
❑ Master of the Pack	Gift	R
❑ Merciful Blow	Gift	U
❑ Messenger's Fortitude	Gift	U
❑ Might of Thor	Gift	U
❑ Mindspeak	Gift	C
❑ Moon Bridge Escape	Gift	U
❑ Mother's Touch	Gift	C
❑ Odor of Skunk	Gift	U
❑ Persuasion	Gift	C
❑ Razor Claws	Gift	U
❑ Remove Gaia's Blessing	Gift	U
❑ Roll Over	Gift	U
❑ Scream of Gaia	Gift	U
❑ Serenity	Gift	C
❑ Shroud	Gift	U
❑ Silver Claws	Gift	R
❑ Song of Rage	Gift	U
❑ Spirit Drain	Gift	R
❑ Spirit of the Fray	Gift	U
❑ Staredown	Gift	C
❑ Sticky Paws	Gift	C
❑ Survivor	Gift	R
❑ Take the True Form	Gift	U
❑ Trackless Waste	Gift	U
❑ True Fear	Gift	U
❑ Whelp Body	Gift	U
❑ Wisdom of the Seer	Gift	R
❑ Caern Building	Moot	U
❑ Calling a Champion	Moot	R
❑ Close the Bawn	Moot	R
❑ Impergium	Moot	R
❑ Jackal's Curse	Moot	C
❑ Justice Under Gaia	Moot	R
❑ Legendary Leadership	Moot	R
❑ Praise the Malformed	Moot	R
❑ Quoting the Litany	Moot	U
❑ Rite of Passage	Moot	C
❑ Ritual Challenge	Moot	C
❑ Saving Face	Moot	C
❑ Silver Record	Moot	C
❑ Skindancer	Moot	R
❑ The Stolen Wolf	Moot	U
❑ Tribal Alliance	Moot	C
❑ Tribal War	Moot	R
❑ Winter Wolf	Moot	C
❑ Gathering for the Departed	Rite	C
❑ Rite of Glory	Rite	C
❑ Rite of Investiture	Rite	R
❑ Rite of Wisdom	Rite	C
❑ Rite of Wounding	Rite	U
❑ Satire Song	Rite	U
❑ Stone of Scorn	Rite	U
❑ Victory Party	Rite	C

Character Name	Rarity	Tribe
❑ Shakar	R	Bagheera
❑ Amari Howls-from-Soul	C	Black Furies
❑ Julisha/Thousand Masks	R	Black Furies
❑ Mari Cabrah	U	Black Furies
❑ Sister Judith Paws-of-Light	U	Black Furies
❑ Susan Anthony	C	Black Furies
❑ Volcheka Ibarruri	C	Black Furies
❑ Banana Split	C	Bone Gnawers
❑ Buggerhead	U	Bone Gnawers
❑ Crick Rumwrangler	C	Bone Gnawers
❑ Dharma Bum	C	Bone Gnawers
❑ Mother Larissa	R	Bone Gnawers
❑ Scratches-at-Fleas	U	Bone Gnawers
❑ Cernonous	U	Children/Gaia
❑ Diem	C	Children/Gaia
❑ Pearl River	R	Children/Gaia
❑ Questor Treetalker	C	Children/Gaia
❑ Tim Rowantree	C	Children/Gaia
❑ True Silverheels	U	Children/Gaia
❑ Bron Mac Fionn	R	Fianna
❑ Goll Mac Mourna	U	Fianna
❑ Morgan the Unworthy	C	Fianna
❑ No'iri'n Ni' Dhonaill	C	Fianna
❑ Son-of-Moonlight	U	Fianna
❑ Wind-Across-the-Hills	C	Fianna
❑ Bladetooth	C	Get of Fenris
❑ Carla Grimsson	U	Get of Fenris
❑ Fang Jumper	C	Get of Fenris
❑ Gere Hunts-the Hunters	U	Get of Fenris
❑ Golgol Fangs-First	R	Get of Fenris
❑ Scar Throat Leech-Killer	C	Get of Fenris
❑ Roger Daly	R	Glass Walkers
❑ Simon Gentle	C	Glass Walkers
❑ Song Chiang	U	Glass Walkers
❑ Syntax	C	Glass Walkers
❑ Teeth-of-Titanium	U	Glass Walkers
❑ Virus-to-Wyrm	C	Glass Walkers
❑ Aurgra	R	Gurahl
❑ Allamande	R	Ratkin
❑ Eater-of-Bears	C	Red Talons
❑ Growls-at-Moon	U	Red Talons
❑ Mamu	R	Red Talons
❑ Old Storm-Chaser	U	Red Talons
❑ Spotlight	C	Red Talons
❑ Stands-Like-Mountain	C	Red Talons
❑ Anna Kliminski	R	Shadow Lords
❑ Carleson Ruah	C	Shadow Lords
❑ Edgewalker	C	Shadow Lords
❑ Ivan Korda	C	Shadow Lords
❑ Roar of Storms	U	Shadow Lords
❑ Zachary Ellison	U	Shadow Lords
❑ Grek Twice-Tongue	U	Silent Striders
❑ Natasha Moon Chaser	C	Silent Striders
❑ Nephthys Mu'at	U	Silent Striders
❑ Passer	C	Silent Striders
❑ Tanzut	C	Silent Striders
❑ Walks-with-Might	R	Silent Striders
❑ Greyfist	U	Silver Fangs
❑ Grimfang	R	Silver Fangs
❑ Lord Albrecht	U	Silver Fangs
❑ Roshen One-Arm	C	Silver Fangs
❑ Sings-for-the-Beast	C	Silver Fangs
❑ Sofya Softkiller	C	Silver Fangs
❑ Antonine Teardrop	U	Stargazers
❑ Gesar	C	Stargazers
❑ Howard Koar	C	Stargazers
❑ Morihei High-Mountain	R	Stargazers
❑ Rainpuddle	C	Stargazers
❑ Thunder Tiger	U	Stargazers
❑ Anna 'Eyes/Sun' Pelfrey	U	Uktena
❑ Guides-to-Truth	R	Uktena
❑ Jacky Gecko	C	Uktena
❑ Jubati	C	Uktena
❑ Lamurun	U	Uktena
❑ Running Creek	C	Uktena
❑ Allison Kachina	U	Wendigo
❑ Blood-on-the-Wind	R	Wendigo
❑ Charging Bull	U	Wendigo
❑ Evan Heals-the-Past	C	Wendigo
❑ Eyes-of-Frost	C	Wendigo
❑ Thomas Kachina	C	Wendigo

Past Lives

- ❑ Alexander ThunderRage, Shadow Lord
- ❑ Gunnar Draugrbane, Get of Fenris
- ❑ Jack Debiltongue, Bone Gnawers
- ❑ Kelly Still Waters, Children of Gaia
- ❑ Klaital Stargazer, Stargazers
- ❑ Leukippes, Black Furies
- ❑ Lone Wolf Lupo, Glass Walkers
- ❑ Oisin Mac Gaelach, Fianna
- ❑ Old Red Eagle, Uktena
- ❑ Old Wolf of the Woods, Red Talons
- ❑ Shogeka Hunter Moon, Wendigo
- ❑ Shu Horus, Silent Striders
- ❑ Yuri Tvarovitch, Silver Fangs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Single Card Strategies

by Jeff Scott Franzmann

Chub Toad & Orcish Lumberjack

Twisted roots and brambles, rotten stumps and fallen logs, nothing slowed the progress of the beast which crashed through the undergrowth. The Necromancer stood his ground, tapping his foot with impatience as the immense toad lurched towards him with incredible leaps. Nests and cones were shook loose from the tops of the trees as the spiny amphibian made its way to Canticle.

"Darby, it really would be best if you could exercise some small measure of control over your...pets."

The toad sat before Canticle, bulbous eyes devoid of understanding. A muffled shout could be heard from within the toad, and a small, weathered hand forced open the creatures mouth. Darby appeared moments later, pipe still clenched in his teeth, hands holding open the toad's mouth.

"Sweet mother o' Eire! Took me boi surprise he did! Unpredictable, he be, this here..."

Chub Toad! A 1/1 creature costing 1 Green and 2 Colorless mana to call forth, the Chub Toad uses its natural abilities to fullest advantage. If the Toad is blocking, or is blocked, it gains +2/+2.

Clearly, such an ability can be used to fullest effect in a wide variety of situations. Apart from the obvious applications with Norrit, the Nettling Imp, and Siren's Call, the Toad can be put to more eclectic uses as well.

A well-constructed Green deck should be able to summon a Chub Toad by the second turn. Tossing Armor of Faith or an Unholy Strength on the Toad at this point can create real problems for your opponent. Letting the creature through, he or she will take damage. However, blocking it at such an early point in the duel will almost guarantee destruction of the defending creature. And on the defensive, a Chub Toad with one simple Enchantment can be a frightening prospect. With Unholy Strength, for all intents and purposes, you have a 5/4 defender for a total cost of 4 mana. Not only will this protect the Toad from the depredations of the Prodigal Sorcerer and Rod of Ruin, but it also forces your opponent to deal with a problem while you create new ones.

Another Enchantment which can prove quite useful with Chub Toad is a Prismatic Ward geared to the color used by an opponent. Not only will you be able to deal a significant amount of damage on the defensive, but you will also secure the safety of the Toad. If the duty of the Toad is also offensive in nature, the various Scarabs are a wise choice. On the attack, the Toad will either get through and deal three damage, or mete out five to a blocking creature. On the defensive, a 5/5 blocker is not a pleasant thing for an attacker to deal with. If you can't decide where to place it, attack or defense, use the Fyndhorn Brownie or Jandor's Saddlebags and use it for both.

While not as obvious, there are other situations where the ability of the Toad can prove worthwhile. Since the bonus lasts until the end of the turn, a Toad can block something insignificant, and then be sacrificed to the Diamond Valley for a quick three life. Since the Diamond Valley can be utilized after block has been declared, there is nothing to prevent a Chub Toad from declaring a block, and once the boost has taken place, tossing itself into the Valley.

Pulling at the edges of his vest, damp and sticky from its time in the Toad, Darby stabbed a thumb to the west.

"Hrm, delayed enough I was, sure an' we were. Time it was we'd best get movin', or we'll foind our puir wee melons buggered up roight and proper..."

Canticle shook his head. The Leprechaun had a painful habit of failing to get to the point. He was about to say something when the earth shook slightly, and a tremendous crack echoed off the trees. A smudge of greasy black smoke puffed out over the tree tops, and the Chub Toad fled in panic, bowling over the Leprechaun.

"Och, in for it now we are..."

A gleaming metal disk smashed into the earth where the toad had been, churning up mud and filth. High above, a giggling orc worked feverishly at the controls of his machine, barely maintaining control of a mechanical arm. A buzzsaw whirred into life at the end of the arm, cutting into the trunk of a nearby oak. The Scarwood was being worked by an..

Orcish Lumberjack! At 1 Red mana, this 1/1 creature is an excellent investment. The ecological naiveté of the Lumberjack allows it to sacrifice a forest to provide 3 mana to its controller, in any combination of red or green that is desired.

The most gruesome use of this creature is apparent to any who have dabbled extensively in magic. A kill of an opposing Mage can be guaranteed on the second turn, using nothing more than rudimentary spells. On the first turn, tap a mountain to summon the Lumberjack. On the second, put a forest into play, and have the Lumberjack sacrifice it for Green mana. Now, you have three green mana and an untapped Mountain. Cast Channel, use 19 life, and then cast Fireball. Your opponent will not be amused.

This use underlines the greatest aspect of the Lumberjack: speed. The sacrifice of one simple forest to gain three mana is an investment well worth making to gain the upper hand in a duel. A prudent mage can summon a Tor Giant on the second turn, bringing out a 3/3 while an opponent is still struggling to garner mana. Since the sacrifice has to be a forest, worse things can be done. Bring out a Forest, tap it to summon Fyndhorn Elves, and from that point on, Forests can be used to power the Lumberjack. It allows a Mage who utilizes Red and Green to access a slightly more costly Dark Ritual, adding to the already rapid nature of Green magicks. With Wild Growth and Llanowar Elves, the possibility of a third turn Shivan Dragon is not only realistic, but probable. For example, a first turn Forest, Llanowar Elf combination, with a second turn Mountain, Orcish Lumberjack, Wild Growth gives you a potential six mana by the third turn.

The potential this creates is immense, and can only be touched on in such a brief treatise. Sacrificing a single forest to bring out creatures which would otherwise arrive later in the duel is almost always a wise investment. Lands can be replenished later in the duel, and the potential benefits of a second turn Radjan Spirit or Elder Druid cannot be underestimated.

In addition to the early turn benefits which can be provided by the Lumberjack, it still serves a purpose later in the duel. In a pinch, the Lumberjack's power can be used to pump up a Dragon Whelp, Fireball, Firebreathing or Shivan Dragon to provide that duel ending punch. If you're faced with a Power Sink, the extra mana provided by the Lumberjack can be a lifesaver. And for the truly desperate, one could sacrifice all of one's forests for use in a Stream of Life.

Another benefit of using the Lumberjack becomes apparent when you realize that it is an Orc. Under the auspices of an Orcish General, it can be boosted along with the other Orcs under your command...or it can be sacrificed to provide that boost. When it is no longer serving a useful function, you can sacrifice it to the Raiding Party, or take a chance using the Orcish Captain. When you're using the colors of Red and Green, the inclusion of Orcish Lumberjack is something which should be given serious consideration. ❑

Cardiology

FPG Honors TSR: Four Fantastic Fantasy Sets

By Katherine Shelly Pfeiffer © 1995. Art uprovided by FPG and © 1995.

In the last several months, FPG has released a series of trading card sets celebrating the work of fantasy artists associated with TSR. I've dedicated this column to sets by Clyde Caldwell, Jeff Easley, David Cherry and Gerald Brom.

A note on production quality: The excellent quality of FPG cards continues to improve. Since last December, they have increased the card stock they use from 14 points to 18 points. All the sets discussed below are printed on this heavier card stock with aqueous and UV coatings on both sides. These are truly luxurious cards - the state of the art in the industry.

Clyde Caldwell
Red Sands
© 1995 Clyde Caldwell. Courtesy of FPG.

Clyde Caldwell

Clyde Caldwell is well known to all role playing enthusiasts for his spectacular art, appearing in a wide range of *TSR* products (including **Forgotten Realms, Dragonlance** and **Ravenloft** as well as numerous calendars.) During the past 17 years he has done fantasy and science fiction covers for virtually every mass-market book publisher including Ace, Avon and Warner. His covers for **Heavy Metal** and **Dragon** are the most famous of many. In 1992 he left TSR to pursue a freelance career. Recent work includes projects for White Wolf and Palladium.

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that this set includes all your favorite Caldwell TSR images. **Spellfire** enthusiasts will recognize his paintings as the source of many cards. Caldwell does a great job of creating characters from other times and places. His meticulous oil paintings capture the intricate detail of myriad objects and creatures, making them believable. His crafty wizards and alluring sorceresses, powerful male and female warriors and ferocious beasts are all here. The card backs each include a different sketch inside a beautiful frame. Caldwell's comments give us worthwhile information on the paintings.

Name: The Fantasy Art of Clyde Caldwell
Publisher: FPG ❖ **Artwork:** A ❖ **Production Values:** A+
Cards in Set: 90 ❖ **Cards Per Pack:** 10, 36 packs/box.
Approx. price for complete set: $12
Approx. price for box: $52
Decollation: Moderate (I got two complete sets, was nine short of a third and had parts of 3 others.)
Chase Cards: 6 Metallic Storm @ $9.00 (I got 3 metallic cards in my box.) 1,000 randomly inserted, foil-stamped and "autographed" cards.

Jeff Easley

Like Caldwell, Easley is well known to all *TSR* devotees. He has done artwork for **AD&D, Greyhawk Adventures, Al Quadim, Ravenloft, DragonLance,** etc. A dedicated artist and lover of the fantastic since childhood, Easley has worked for TSR for over a decade.

His painting style features loose brushwork which complements his dramatic, swirling color. His open brushwork helps him create intense moods, electric atmosphere and exhilarating action. Flying and fighting dragons, demonic skeleton warriors, wise wizards, handsome warriors and

Jeff Easley
Dragon Highlord
© 1995 Jeff Easley. Courtesy of FPG.

elegant dwarves inhabit Easley's dynamic paintings.

If you're a Spellfire player or collector you'll recognize the source of many of the images as Easley's paintings. The back of each card sport a beautiful, ornate border which surrounds a detail from different Easley sketches. Quotes from the artist provide useful information on the paintings. Two composite paintings of TSR characters, originally used as end papers, were used as the basis for the two metallic chase card sets.

Name: The Fantasy Art of Jeff Easley
Publisher: FPG ❖ **Artwork:** A ❖ **Production Values:** A+
Cards in Set: 90 ❖ **Cards Per Pack:** 10, 36 packs/box.
Approx. price for complete set: $12
Approx. price for box: $53
Decollation: Poor (I got only 1 complete set, 4 short of another complete set, 4 other partial sets.)
Chase Cards: 6 Metallic Storm @ $9.00 (I got 3 metallic cards in my box.) 1,000 randomly inserted, foil-stamped and "autographed" cards.

David Cherry

David Alan Cherry's work reflects his distinguished scholarly background. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1972 with a BA in Latin. In 1975 he received a JD degree and he practiced law until the early 80s, when he left law to follow a career in painting. His work has been selected for numerous prestigious art exhibitions, and he has been nominated repeatedly for Hugo Awards (the premier award for sci-fi and fantasy art) and won many others. His work has appeared on the covers of countless fantasy writers such as Marion Bradley Zimmer, Anne McCaffrey and Piers Anthony.

I love the scholarly aspects of his work - the inclusion of specific historical details such as Assyrian reliefs in "The King Is A Fool" and "Man of Prophecy," 1st century Roman frescos in "Filia Mea" and Minoan frescoes in "Scattered Reflections." These details add a refined dimension to his

David Cherry
Soror Marium
© 1995 David Cherry. Courtesy of FPG.

paintings. Cherry enjoys historical detail in costumes, as well.

This set of cards has an especially large group of attractive and positive images of women. His women exude wisdom, power and candor. And it's refreshing to see images of women attired in the types of clothing they might actually have worn. This collection also includes many science fiction paintings - most containing spaceships. Mermaids, wizards, scenes of fantasy combat and a smattering of portraits fill out this excellent collection. Highly recommended.

Name: David Cherry
Publisher: FPG ❖ **Artwork:** A ❖ **Production Values:** A+
Cards in Set: 90 ❖ **Cards Per Pack:** 10; 36 packs/box.
Approx. price for complete set: $12
Approx. price for box: $52
Decollation: Moderate (I got 2 complete sets, was 1 card short of a third, and parts of three others.)
Chase Cards: 6 Metallic Storm @ $9.00 (I got 3 metallic cards in my box.) 1,000 randomly inserted, foil-stamped and "autographed" cards.

Gerald Brom

Gerald Brom is among the youngest of the top fantasy artists. Born in 1965, he began working as a commercial illustrator at 21. Among his clients were Coca-Cola, Columbia Pictures and IBM. Within five years, he grew frustrated with this work and moved into fantasy illustration, landing a full time position with *TSR*. Among his most well-known achievements are the design of the **Dark Sun** game line and contributions to Dragonlance, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft and **Gamma World**.

Ever restless, he left TSR in 1994 to pursue independent fantasy work. This card set includes his most popular TSR works: the primary Dark Sun paintings among them. He also created about 30 just for the set. Brom's fascination with the macabre is particularly well represented here. Many wasted, skeletal, sunken-eyed figures in ragged clothes people his paintings. Brom created the distinctly macabre chase cards just for this set. The "Silent Quintet" presents a decapitated and skewered head against a red and metallic background on each card, which fit together as a single image.

Name: Brom
Publisher: FPG ❖ **Artwork:** A ❖ **Production Values:** A+
Cards in Set: 60 ❖ **Cards Per Pack:** 6, 36 packs/box.
Approx. price for complete set: $12
Approx. price for box: $52
Decollation: Moderate (I got 2 complete sets, 8 short of a third and parts of three others.)
Chase Cards: 5 Metallic Storm @ $9.00 (I got 3 metallic cards in my box.) 1,000 randomly inserted, foil-stamped and "autographed" cards.

Brom
Lonewolf
© 1995 Brom. Courtesy of FPG.

Don't Miss These

Ed Beard Lithographs

Ed Beard Jr.'s Destini Productions has just released a set of limited edition prints. **Portfolio 1: Eternal Quest** includes six lithographs in a limited edition of 2000. Each set comes with a certificate of authenticity. These include images from his **Flights of Fantasy** and **Anarchy** card series. The prints are 11 x 14 inches on 8 point stock and printed with excellent color and high resolution. Priced at $25.00.

FPG: Colossal Cards II

Released in May, the second collection of BIG cards. The spectacular reproduction quality of these cards makes them highly desirable. To be reviewed in my next column.

FPG: Thomas Kidd

Released with the Brom set is Thomas Kidd. This first-rate collection is a must. I will review it in my next column.

If you need help finding any of the trading card sets mentioned in this column, please call Comics Utah, 800-927-5075. Be sure and tell them SHADIS Cardiology sent you.

I'd be most grateful for your questions and comments about the items in this column. You can write to me care of SHADIS or e-mail me at CompuServe, 71151,252. ❑

SHADIS
The Independent Games Magazine

Highlander

A Collector's Checklist for Thunder Castle Games' Immortals Card Game.

Name	User	Type	Rarity
❑ Amanda	Amanda	Persona	R
❑ Back away	Amanda	Dodge	U
❑ Continuity	Amanda	Event	U
❑ Distract	Amanda	Dodge	R
❑ Jump	Amanda	Dodge	U
❑ Left Side Step	Amanda	Dodge	U
❑ Master	Amanda	Attack	R
❑ Master	Amanda	Situation	R
❑ Right Side Step	Amanda	Dodge	U
❑ Seduce	Amanda	Event	R
❑ Steal	Amanda	Event	U
❑ Suprise Attack	Amanda	Event	R
❑ Connor MacLeod	Connor MacLeod	Persona	R
❑ Back away	Connor MacLeod	Dodge	U
❑ Combination	Connor MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Continuity	Connor MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Disarm	Connor MacLeod	Attack	U
❑ Dodge	Connor MacLeod	Dodge	U
❑ Extra Shot	Connor MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Power Blow	Connor MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Duncan MacLeod	Duncan MacLeod	Persona	R
❑ Back away	Duncan MacLeod	Dodge	U
❑ Battle Rage	Duncan MacLeod	Event	R
❑ Combination	Duncan MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Continuity	Duncan MacLeod	Situation	U
❑ Disarm	Duncan MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Dodge	Duncan MacLeod	Dodge	U
❑ Extra Shot	Duncan MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Flashback	Duncan MacLeod	Situation	U
❑ Inspiration	Duncan MacLeod	Event	R
❑ Jump	Duncan MacLeod	Dodge	U
❑ Master	Duncan MacLeod	Dodge	R
❑ Master	Duncan MacLeod	Attack	R
❑ Master	Duncan MacLeod	Situation	R
❑ Power Blow	Duncan MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Trip	Duncan MacLeod	Event	U
❑ Alan Baines	Generic	Event	R
❑ Angry Mob	Generic	Event	C
❑ Avery Hoskins	Generic	Situation	R
❑ Carl	Generic	Event	R
❑ Caught in the Act	Generic	Event	U
❑ Challenge	Generic	Event	C
❑ Charlie	Generic	Situation	R
❑ Counterfeit	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Counterfeit	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Counterfeit	Generic	Event	C
❑ Darius	Generic	Event	R
❑ Darkness	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Darkness	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Darkness	Generic	Event	C
❑ Extra Weapon	Generic	Object	C
❑ FBI	Generic	Event	R
❑ Feint	Generic	Event	C
❑ Fortune Teller	Generic	Event	R
❑ Gypsy	Generic	Event	C
❑ Gypsy Lover	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Head Shot	Generic	Event	C
❑ Heroic Deed	Generic	Event	R
❑ Holy Ground	Generic	Event	C
❑ Holy Ground	Generic	Event	C
❑ Interference	Generic	Event	C
❑ Investigate	Generic	Event	C
❑ Left Guard	Generic	Block	C
❑ Linda Plager	Generic	Event	R
❑ Lower Center	Generic	Block	C
❑ Lower Center	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Lower Left	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Lower Left	Generic	Block	C
❑ Lower Right	Generic	Block	C
❑ Lower Right	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Master	Generic	Situation	R
❑ Maurice	Generic	Event	R
❑ Middle Left	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Middle Right	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Misfortune	Generic	Event	C
❑ Mugging	Generic	Event	C
❑ Narrow Escape	Generic	Event	C
❑ Pedestrian	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Pedestrian	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Police	Generic	Event	C
❑ Police	Generic	Event	C
❑ Quality Blade	Generic	Object	C
❑ Recover Weapon	Generic	Event	C
❑ Renee Delaney	Generic	Event	R
❑ Reporter	Generic	Event	C
❑ Reporter	Generic	Event	C
❑ Right Guard	Generic	Block	C
❑ Scorn	Generic	Event	R
❑ Sea Witch	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Sea Witch	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Sea Witch	Generic	Event	C
❑ Segur	Generic	Event	R
❑ Stamina	Generic	Event	C
❑ Street Punk	Generic	Event	U
❑ Tessa	Generic	Situation	R
❑ Thrust	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Unexpected	Generic	Event	R
❑ Unholy Alliance	Generic	Event	C
❑ Unholy Alliance	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Unholy Alliance	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Upper Center	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Upper Center	Generic	Block	C
❑ Upper Left	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Upper Left	Generic	Block	C
❑ Upper Right	Generic	Block	C
❑ Upper Right	Generic	Attack	C
❑ Watcher	Generic	Event	U
❑ Watcher	Generic	Event	R
❑ Watcher	Generic	Situation	R
❑ Watcher	Generic	Event	C
❑ Watchers	Generic	Situation	C
❑ Watchers	Generic	Event	C
❑ Luther	Luther	Persona	R
❑ Back Away	Luther	Dodge	U
❑ Combination	Luther	Event	U
❑ Continuity	Luther	Event	U
❑ Disappear	Luther	Event	R
❑ Disarm	Luther	Attack	U
❑ Dodge	Luther	Dodge	U
❑ Intimidate	Luther	Event	R
❑ Power Blow	Luther	Event	U
❑ Taunt	Luther	Event	R
❑ Trip	Luther	Event	U
❑ Nefertiri	Nefertiri	Persona	R
❑ Back Away	Nefertiri	Dodge	U
❑ Battle Rage	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Combination	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Continuity	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Desperation	Nefertiri	Event	R
❑ Disarm	Nefertiri	Attack	U
❑ Dodge	Nefertiri	Dodge	U
❑ Extra Shot	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Power Blow	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Seduce	Nefertiri	Event	R
❑ Trip	Nefertiri	Event	U
❑ Richie Ryan	Richie Ryan	Persona	R
❑ Back Away	Richie Ryan	Dodge	U
❑ Battle Rage	Richie Ryan	Event	R
❑ Combination	Richie Ryan	Event	U
❑ Continuity	Richie Ryan	Event	U
❑ Dodge	Richie Ryan	Dodge	U
❑ Extra Shot	Richie Ryan	Event	U
❑ Luck	Richie Ryan	Event	R
❑ Master	Richie Ryan	Situation	R
❑ Master	Richie Ryan	Block	R
❑ Power Blow	Richie Ryan	Event	U
❑ Trip	Richie Ryan	Event	U
❑ Slan Quince	Slan Quince	Persona	R
❑ Back Away	Slan Quince	Dodge	U
❑ Berserk	Slan Quince	Event	R
❑ Intimidate	Slan Quince	Event	R
❑ Run Through	Slan Quince	Event	R
❑ Shooting Blade	Slan Quince	Event	R
❑ Xavier St. Cloud	Xavier St. Cloud	Persona	R
❑ Alliance	Xavier St. Cloud	Event	R
❑ Back Away	Xavier St. Cloud	Dodge	U
❑ Disarm	Xavier St. Cloud	Attack	U
❑ Dodge	Xavier St. Cloud	Dodge	U
❑ Forethought	Xavier St. Cloud	Situation	R
❑ Hook	Xavier St. Cloud	Attack	R
❑ Plan Ahead	Xavier St. Cloud	Situation	R
❑ Poison Gas	Xavier St. Cloud	Situation	R
❑ Power Blow	Xavier St. Cloud	Event	U
❑ Stalk	Xavier St. Cloud	Attack	R
❑ Trip	Xavier St. Cloud	Event	U

Welcome To The True Past...
GUARDIANS
Limited Edition
AUGUST 1995
FPG

The Market Platz

The Market's Open

The Market Platz is a meeting place where readers pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players, etc.

Subscribers may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of twenty-five words. Non-subscribers can place ads for 25¢ per word with a limit of twenty-five words.

Convention announcements, group meetings and public service notices can be placed free of charge.

Ads will be placed on a first-come-first-served basis, with subscribers having priority.

Classifieds

Hey Gorilla —
Your sucking chest wound is showing.

–R.

Titania —
Yes. I do know
And I'm proud that I'm one of them.

-Thomas

Corin,
Good luck at school. I love you. Always have

-David

Wormy, where are you? You have a home here!

Lane Mashburn,
Concerned parties of the Preserve Liberation Organization are looking for you. Contact the AEG offices with any leads.

D.S.

Monica —
Will you marry me?

- Bob

George,
I like your yard.

- Samwise

Kevin—
Happy Birthday Daddy!

Love,
Tanya and Tiffany

"This layout room is strictly no-Marketing-allowed."
"Well, it certainly seems to have an open-door policy on [redacted]."

[Right, as if we're going to let *that* through. *-Layout*]

Ed,
The squirrels are restless. They need a leader to mold them, to prepare them for the coming millenium. You are that leader.

-Sebastian

"Layout is pain, Highness. Anyone who tells you different is selling something."

Malrog is watching. Take care, lest you rouse him from his slumber…

•ARTISTS WANTED •

Alderac Entertainment Group is looking for artists with a knack for technical line drawings for an upcoming project. Drawings will involve designing and developing vehicles, weapons and equipment from conceptual drawings and notes. Send portfolio to AEG

Attn: Art Director,
4045 Guasti Road Suite 212,
Ontario, California, 91761

Jean,
You have the prettiest eyes. Why do you hide them?

-Mac

"You want the layout? **You want the layout? You *can't handle* the layout!** Son, we live in a world that has deadlines and those deadlines have to be met by men with guts. Who's gonna do it? You? *You*, Mr. Ad Manager?"

ALL POWER TO THE INTERNS!!! THE REVOLUTION IS AT HAND!!!

Aim, take thy beak from out my heart and thy form from out my door.

Kim,
Looking forward to spending some time together. Perhaps 1998? Keep smiling.

-Big Daddy

Zarkov,
I don't know what you've done to my BMW, but I want it back. Now.

-Simon

To the Walkers whose paths are dark and treacherous —
I am with you, my comrades. Time changes all things, but I remain unchanging through your strength. The New Moon will rise again…

WANTED

A good pirate movie without either Errol Flynn or Douglas Fairbanks. Does one exist? If so, and you know the title, please contact the SHADIS offices. We really want to know.

To Messrs. Kurtz and McBride-

A matter of some importance has come up regarding our mutual acquaintences. Please contact me at your earliest possible convienence through the usual channels.

Regards,
Robert Olsen

"But deep down, in places you don't like to talk about at parties, you want me on that layout, you need me on that layout, because I keep your precious ad copy safe at night!"

When Light and Darkness Clash, only Chaos stands to profit

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Artwork © 1995 Susan Van Camp, Mark Poole, Jeff Menges, Lynn Hyde, Joel Poppleton, Brad Williams, Danwon Denys and Matthew Yarro respectively.

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In New Europa, etiquette is more than what spoon you eat soup with.

Comme Il Faut

All Things Right & Proper

A Host's Guide to *Castle Falkenstein*

Life in the Steam Age™ is a confusing web of restrictions, rules, mores, and manners. But fret not. In *Comme Il Faut,* the latest supplement for *Castle Falkenstein,* R. Talsorian Games gives Players and Hosts alike a guide to life in the neo-Victorian world of New Europa.

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- **Distinctions between Social Classes**
- **Alternate Rules & Clarifications of the Great Game**
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*And if you don't know what *DeBrett's* is, my dear, then you *definitely* need to read this book.

New Perspectives

The World of Miniatures

By Ken Carpenter © 1995 ❖ Photography by Don Witmer © 1995

All right! Now I'm upset! "Why", you ask? How could someone as good-natured and easy going as me get worked up about something? I've been stood up! Actually, it's all *Iron Crown Enterprises'* fault. They have been toying with my emotions for going on six months and I'm not gonna take it any more. That's it! We're through! No more leading me along, I'm wise to their games! Okay, you probably want the whole story, right? No? Shaddup and read.

Silent Death never really interested me. What with those dorky green letters and all, I figured it for a schlock game - at best a weird rehash of *Alien* or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Anyway, I saw it being played at Origins last year and realized that it was a ship to ship space combat game (pretty swift, eh?) I really like **Full Thrust,** so I sat down to play the game and guess what? It was a blast and I was hooked. Now I play both Silent Death and Full Thrust, since each has a unique feel.

But that's not why I'm worked up. I.C.E. has been stalling their second edition, which promises new options and added rules for ship building, since February or March. Now they're talking June... oops, July. If it *does* get released, we'll take a close look at the system in next issue, and also explore some of the space ship figures available for Silent Death and similar games, such as Full Thrust, **Traveller: The New Era,** and **Star Trek.** If it isn't released in time for next issue, I'm sending cousin Guido over to collect a full set of ICE kneecaps. (Hey! A great idea for a new Collectible Body Parts game!)

In the meantime, here's a few news bits to bring joy into our otherwise drab lives. This GenCon will see the release of **War Zone,** the 28mm scale **Mutant Chronicles** miniatures rules (*Heartbreaker/Target Games*), and probably the long-awaited **Cry Havoc** rules (*Rank & File*) for 15mm medieval battles. There is also talk about a new rule set from *Ground Zero Games* (the creators of Full Thrust and **Dirtside**), starter kits for **Star Wars Miniatures Rules** (*West End Games*), and a new fantasy miniatures game (to be announced). There will definitely be new **BattleTech** stuff, and maybe even new support for **Ogre Miniatures!** (Go on!) Well...maybe. **Legions of Steel** Table Top Rules (*Global Games*) is being delayed but will hopefully be out by year end.

The next couple of issues should be packed with good stuff, as we focus on some of these new releases and find out what's good and what forms a vacuum. Let me know what you think of the new games after you've had a chance to look at them!

In order to check the pulse of you closet miniatures fanatics out there, and what miniatures games you are most interested in, we're gonna bribe you. From now through the end of the year (that would be 1995 - the year ICE is supposed to release Silent Death 2nd edition...), we'll be accepting entries into the New Perspectives "Gimme" Contest.

To enter, here's all you gotta do: Send me a letter with your name, address and the names of the miniatures games you are most interested in. Isn't that easy? If you want to say hi and call me names, that's fine too. So what's in it for you? In January, we will have a random drawing from the

letters we've received, and the lucky S.O.G. (sonovagun) that wrote the letter will receive a box of miniature goodies! That's right, plastic and/or metal figures from many of your favorite manufacturers and games.

So it'll cost you a couple minutes and a stamp, but I promise much better odds than Publisher's Clearinghouse! Write: New Perspectives "Gimme", P.O. Box 9, Murrieta, CA 92564. No purchase necessary.

Last but not least - August sees the release of the first book in AEG's **The Miniatures Hobbyist** series, **The Guide to Miniatures Painting - Book I.** Book I covers painting techniques for miniatures-painting and gives easy to read instructions. Pester your local hobby stores for it.

Reviews

CityTech 2nd Edition

FASA's BattleTech line

Written by Bryan and Mike Nystul, Sam Lewis

#1608 ❖ 1/285th ❖ $25

Presentation: 8 ❖ Playability: 9 ❖ Value: 8

When you think of 8-meter-tall machines of destruction, you naturally think of **BattleTech.** Well, FASA recently released the second edition of **CityTech,** which provides rules for 'mech combat in urban settings. Now you can level a city while taking shots at the opposing 'mech force - no additional effort required!

The rule set is nearly identical to basic BattleTech but adds numerous rules for dealing with intracity combat, including slides, using buildings as cover, 'mechs on top of buildings, and many more topics peculiar to the environment. The only noticeable changes from the first edition were to bring CityTech into line with 3rd edition BattleTech. If the city-specific rules were published separately from the Battletech rules, there would only be 8-10 pages of information, but combined it allows players to use CityTech as a stand-alone game. As a stand-alone, CityTech is just about as much fun as BattleTech, but it plays a little slower, due to restricted movement and line of sight.

Along with the CityTech rules, you get 16 plastic 'mechs, two battletech map sheets with city terrain, a number of counters, and a number of 'mech record sheets. After nearly 10 years and three editions,

CityTech™

BattleTech is still one of the best miniatures games, and environments on the market. CityTech expands the options available for BattleTech, and gives you a good deal in the process.

Hellfire Giant W/ Swords, Barbarian Giant
Grim Reaper Casting's Nasteez
Sculpted by Jim Bove
#1066, #1068 ❖ 25mm ❖ $3.25/$3.00
Technical: 6 ❖ Artistic: 6 ❖ Value: 6

Hellfire Giant With Swords and Barbarian Giant

Scotland Yard, Sinister Scientists

Townsfolk, Police

There are almost no traces of parting lines on these figures, though one of the weapons has some thin sheeting along its edge. The only drawback technically is the fit of the pieces. Each figure comes in three pieces (each hand/arm is separate) and will require a little work to get a good fit. The Hellfire has plate and chain armor compete with one horn sticking out of a slit eyed helmet. The barbarian has nicely exaggerated muscle detail and is leaning into his bellowed warcry.

Despite the fit problem, the versatility of pose for the Hellfire giant is great - you can really give him a threatening stance! The Barbarian giant has pretty good versatility as well. Both are well sculpted, making up in creativity and style what they may lack in finesse. Both should paint well and provide a great opportunity for shading.

Scotland Yard, Sinister Scientists
Rafm's Call of Cthulhu line
Sculpted by Robert Murch
#2913, #2914 ❖ 25mm ❖ $4.75 each
Technical: 6 ❖ Artistic: 7 ❖ Value: 8

Other than a few, slight parting lines, the only problems here lie in some sheeting along the edges of the figure and the noticeable tilt of the Sherlock Holmes figure.

Detail is good, though not abundant. Facial features are good and the Victorian dress adds to the feel of these **Cthulhu by Gaslight** era figures. Accessories include bowler hat, umbrella, attache case, pipe, magnifying glass and Sherlock's trademarked double-billed cap.

In addition, we see the arch-nemesis of the Yard personnel - the sinister scientist, complete with deformed servant, lab equipment, and experiment in progress. Crackling bolts of electricity flash between the probes of the madman's generator, preparing to imbue the foul experiment with unearthly life. Fine details, such as the monster's exposed brain and innards, and the raving scientist's pose, make this a great set.

Townsfolk, Police
Rafm's Call of Cthulhu line
Sculpted by Robert Murch
#2917, #2918 ❖ 25mm ❖ $4.75 each
Technical: 7 ❖ Artistic: 7 ❖ Value: 8

A slight mold shift on the paper boy and minor parting lines are the only noticeable problem with these figures. A few of the bases have heavy lines but there is no detail to be bothered.

The calm townsfolk pursuing their regular routine brings a feeling of peacefulness and...wait, all is not as it seems. The conscientious shopkeeper sweeps up just inches away from a box of worm-plagued fruit, and the lady with the baby carriage... is that a tentacle sliding out from under the blanket?!

The police include a wizened old detective and two uniformed officers with weapons ready. Detail is pretty good, with accents such as eight-cornered hats, holsters, and handcuffs.

The facial features of these sets range from average to very good, with the woman pushing her carriage being among the best. Detail is good and these figures will definitely add to the flavor of a Gaslight adventure.

Virtual Adept (m & f), Akashic Brotherhood (m & f)

Ral Partha's Mage line

Sculpted by Jim Johnson

#69-300, #69-304 ❖ 25mm ❖ $4 each

Technical: 8 ❖ Artistic: 8 ❖ Value: 8

Very clean casting make it nearly impossible to find the parting lines in the Virtual Adepts. The Akashic figures had visible parting lines but there were no other problems among the four figures.

The Virtual Adepts drip with techomagery, with heavy cables running from head and arm gear to nearby computer stations. Both have natural poses, with the female reacting to stimuli from the virtual world she is visiting.

From their combat-ready stances and their equipment, the Akashic brotherhood figures ooze 'warrior.' Both are well detailed, with excellent facial features and stylized clothing. All four of these figures are great.

Wolfweres, Zombie Lord w/ Lackeys

Ral Partha's Ravenloft

Sculpted by Dennis Mize

#11-114, ❖ #11-115 25mm ❖ $7.95/$5.50

Technical: 7 ❖ Artistic: 8 ❖ Value: 8

Virtual Adepts and Akashic Brothers

Wolfweres, Zombie Lord with Lackeys

Chaos Knight w/Mace, Bauhaus Ranger w/Heavy Weapon

Knight and Lady, Imrian

Other than the expected mold lines, there was a small amount of sheeting under an arm or two. The figures are, however, easy to clean up.

The Wolfweres set includes two in humanoid form, one a lordly gentleman in jacket and hose, the other a voluptuous female with features and hair that only Dennis Mize could do. In addition, there is a werewolf form carrying his victim, a gypsy dancer if you judge by her costume.

The Zombie Lord set includes the lord and two zombies. The female zombie is beginning to show signs of decay, having lost part of her face, midsection and left arm, while the male zombie is in a much more advanced state of decomposition. The zombie lord also seems to be paying a price for his mastery, as can be seen where the skin has peeled away from his skull on the left side of his face.

Detail is excellent in both sets, with special attention paid to features and costuming, making them both worthy additions to your collection.

Chaos Knight w/Mace, Bauhaus Ranger w/Heavy Weapon

Heartbreaker's Fantasy and Mutant Chronicles lines

Sculpted by Chaz Elliot
#5025, #8001 ❖ 25mm ❖ $2.00 each
Technical: 8 ❖ Artistic: 8 ❖ Value: 8

The typical minor mold lines are the only imperfection with these figures aside from a small rough spot on the Ranger's shoulder pad. A small amount of file work and these will be ready to prime. The chaos knight comes with an extra axe, sword, and shield, in case you want to customize a little. His armor is very stylized, with sharp lines and smooth curves in all the right places. The action of the figure is great as he leans away from the weight of his swing.

Bauhaus has one of the better equipped militaries from the Mutant Chronicles game, counting on quality versus quantity. This Ranger has heavily reinforced armor protecting his whole body, less his missing helmet, and carries what looks like a Deathlockdrum heavy weapon. Details are great from his incredible facial features to his waffle bottomed shoes.

News item - *Heartbreaker* has been redoing their whole Mutant Chronicles line. The rerelease will coincide with the August release of the Mutant Chronicles table top game, War Zone.

Knight & Lady, Imrian

Lance & Laser's Pendragon and Tallislanta lines

Sculpted by Tom Meier, Nevile Stocken
#P-003, T-17 ❖ 25mm
Technical: 7 ❖ Artistic: 9

Few parting lines are visible on these three figures, though the weapon/arms which attach to the Imrian will need some work to improve the fit.

Lance & Laser's Pendragon line has received a great deal of attention the last few years, and you can easily see why. The attention paid to the costuming is incredible, as are the features of this knight and lady. Granted, the knight is attired rather foppishly, but I doubt we'd get away with saying that when he's decked for battle. Pendragon is one of those rare games where the difference in play from the field of honor to behavior in court gives such tremendous roleplaying possibilities!

The Imrian is a very interesting specimen with the look of a great monster for Star Trek. The amphibian overtone and the alien appearance are great. Proportions aren't perfect, but that may very well be a distinction of the Imrian race. He (she?) should paint up very well.

Product: Algeroth - The Apostle of War, The Heretic's Handbook

Game System: Mutant Chronicles, The Techno Fantasy Role-playing Game
Publisher: Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games
Author: Bill King
Price: $19.95

So you want to be a heretic, do you? You've had enough of namby-pamby Doomtroopers and those freelancing wannabees of the Mutant Chronicles RPG? Well, this is your passport! Half of The Heretic's Handbook is useful to players, while the other half is more for GM use, though sneaky players (and you heretic types are all sneaky) may find it educational as well.

Color art is limited to the covers, which are excellently rendered by Paul Bonner, while internal illustrations range from poor to exceptional. Layout is consistent with previous Mutant Chronicle publications, which is to say good.

The Handbook covers many new additions to MC RPG. New character generation for heretics (including new special events), new weapons, and rewards (for particularly useful heretics). Rewards include Bio-technological Gifts and Necrobionics, which range from telepathic communication (so?) to muscle enhancement (+2d6 to your strength - WOW!)

Does this make heretics strong? You bet it does, but when you're a shadow-skulking boil on the *derriere* of humanity, you need something besides your good looks to get you by.

The best heretics are offered transfiguration - metamorphosis into a Dark Legion creature such as a Centurion, Pretorian Stalker, or even (be still my necro-bionic heart...) a Nepharite. If you know the MC rule set, this is like growing hair - you can do it in your sleep! New equipment, gifts, and character information fit snugly into the parent rule system.

We're talking 144 pages of psychotic, disgusting, even disturbed material on Dark Legion activities and lifestyles - what's not to like? It definitely carries dark, sinister overtones and discusses some things in unnecessary detail, but they're trying to make an impression, which they do.

Product: Doomtrooper Cardgame/ Inquisition Expansion

Publisher: Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games
Designer: Brian Winter
Price: $8.95 starter decks, $2.50 booster packs, $2.50 expansion packs

Based on the popular Mutant Chronicles role-playing environment, Doomtrooper allows you to participate in the cataclysmic struggle between the forces of humanity and the Dark Legion. Players use warriors to accomplish missions and destroy opponents, thereby earning promotion points and winning the game.

What's so special about this card game when there are literally dozens out there? Well, the genre for one. Mutant Chroni-

cles (and therefore Doomtrooper) is set in a dark future where mankind accidentally released "the Dark Soul" from an eternity of imprisonment. As repayment, the Dark Soul undertook the annihilation of humanity.

Gathering five Dark Apostles about him, each of whom have dominion over certain powers, the war began. The Dark Legion works both from without humanity (with undead Legionnaires assaulting militarily), and from within (using heretics and traitors to soften the resolve of mankind and to swell the ranks of the Dark Legion.)

Mankind is divided into six organizations. Five of the organizations are megacorporations, each with their own distinctive culture and philosophy. The last group is the Brotherhood. Formed in the first days of the Dark Soul's freedom, the Brotherhood seeks to unite mankind against the Dark Legion, even to utterly destroy the Dark Soul and Dark Apostles.

Each of the five megacorporations and the Brotherhood use Doomtroopers - elite special forces - to battle the forces of the Legion. These are the best of humanities warriors. It is these warriors that occupy the trenches and foxholes against the onslaught of the Dark Legion military might and that carry out special operations against Dark Legion Citadels. Unfortunately, the megacorporations also use the Doomtroopers against each other.

To win the game, players try to reach a predetermined amount of "Promotion Points", which are earned for accomplishing missions or destroying the enemy. Players also keep track of something called "Destiny Points," which are used to bring warriors and some specialty cards into play.

Players use warriors, servants of the various forces in the game (megacorporations, Brotherhood, or Dark Legion), to fight against and destroy their opponents. To help the warriors, players assign them weapons, armor, vehicles and other special equipment. In addition, Brotherhood and Dark Legion forces may receive assistance from The Art or Dark Symmetry, arcane forces of good and evil.

Special cards allow players to perform actions not otherwise allowed, such as pulling a card from your discard pile, zapping another card in play, building up destiny points or toying with another player's destiny and promotion points.

Though less sneaky and subtle than some other card games, such as **Magic: The Gathering** and **Illuminati - New World Order,** play is fast and fun. Rather, it was before the advent of **Inquisition,** Doomtrooper's first expansion.

Inquisition adds a number of new warriors, primarily to the Brotherhood and Dark Legion but also filling gaps in the Cybertronic ranks, a new discipline of The Art, hordes of new equipment, a bunch of new special cards, and a whole new class of card - Relics. No expansion set for any existing card game has had more impact on the basic game than this set does!

Inquisition adds a great deal of subtlety to the game that was lacking before. Sly and deceptive players can now toy with their prey before they swallow them. Special cards allow a warrior to leap from cover and assault the enemy, send cards back to the hand of the enemy player, or steal equipment right off their warriors. New equipment adds power to all sides of the battle lines, and Relics can add incredible power to your forces. Inquisition even introduces the actual Dark Apostles who, while not allowed to participate in combat, have astounding effects on play.

As is customary, I took my pathetic little deck (which seemed incredibly powerful when I made it) to a gaming convention to play against more experienced players. After having my butt handed to me for many hours (geez, where did they get all those Alakais?), I managed to pull a game out. The depth of the game, and the power of certain cards and combinations, is impressive. I would have stayed longer, but I had an ego to assuage. So naturally, I went home and played my 7 and 9 year old kids...they beat me, too. (Geez, where did they get all those Cardinals?!)

I am convinced that Doomtrooper is well on its way toward becoming one of the top 3 or 4 collectible card games. Pre-Inquisition Doomtrooper was a great game, but with Inquisition it steps up to excellent. The next expansion, **War Zone,** should be out in August. If it's half as good as Inquisition...

Product: Imperial - The Clans of Damnation

Game System: Mutant Chronicles The Techno Fantasy Role-playing Game
Publisher: Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games
Author: Matt Forbeck
Price: $14.95

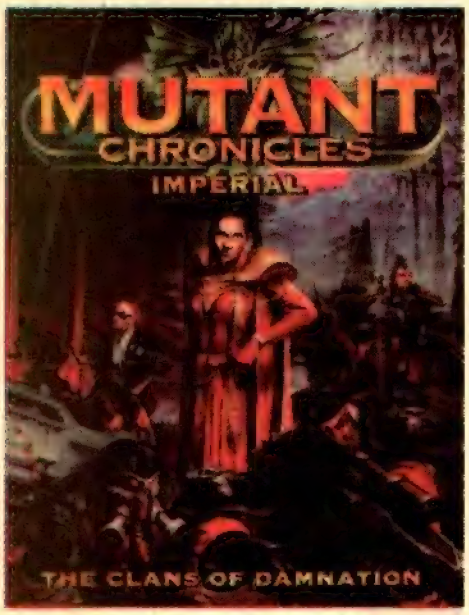
Imperial is certainly the most militant of the megacorporations in the **Mutant Chronicles** universe, with a history of taking what they can't acquire using more... business-like means. This supplement is full of background on the corporation, the major clans within the corporation, and all sorts of other information to give you the imperial mindset for role-playing or GMing a character in Mutant Chronicles.

There are a lot of illustrations - ranging from adequate to incredible - throughout the book, plus some short fiction running along the sidebars. The book is well laid out and follows a similar flow to the Mutant Chronicles and Brotherhood books. Imperial provides a whole new method for generating characteristics (raising your character from infancy through high school), as well as new Adolescent Events, new Special Events, a number of schools and a whole bunch of new professions (including some really great ones, like ISC Field Agent and Special Forces Trooper.) Added skills include Gambling, Tactics, Spacecraft piloting and Space Navigation.

Details are provided for Imperial settlements, military and special equipment. Rules for converting your old Imperial character over to the new system are included, so you don't have to watch the new breed come up and overshadow your favorite old character. Last but not least, there is also a short adventure for experienced players (e.g. tough characters.)

The Mutant Chronicles setting is a spooky look at the future of man, but the nature of the genre is irresistible and soon you're lured into one of the myriad play styles available in the game. Imperial is an important source of background and additional material, and a necessary supplement for any player or GM.

Product: Capitol - Pride and Profit



Mutant Chronicles: The Clans of Damnation

Game System: Mutant Chronicles The Techno Fantasy Role-playing Game
Publisher: Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games
Author: Bill King
Price: $14.95

Capitalism works in the dark future of Mutant Chronicles, as is demonstrated in this 80 page sourcebook for the Capitol megacorporation. Bursting at the seams with all sorts of great background material, Pride and Profit provides direction and motivation for characters as well as corporate and location overviews for gamemasters.

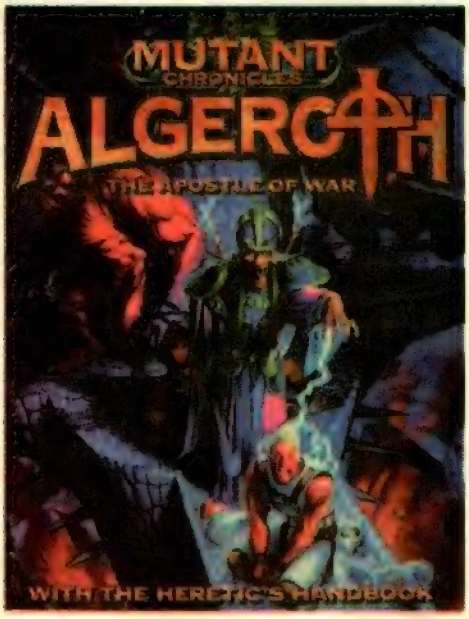
As in other sourcebooks for Mutant Chronicles, new adolescent and special events tables, character types and skills allow players to customize their characters, escaping the more generic approach of the basic role-playing system. Later sections allow these characters to be equipped as various Capitolian military and security forces.

GMs will enjoy the car chase and dog fight rules, additional equipment, background information on San Dorado and Mars, and expanded detail on the corporate structure of Capitol. A nifty scenario for intermediate characters finishes off the book.

Written to hold the readers interest, the only place the book starts to slow down is in the descriptions of locations. The rest of the book reads quickly and keeps your interest. Short stories fill the sidebars, giving a brief look into the lives of Capitolian citizens.

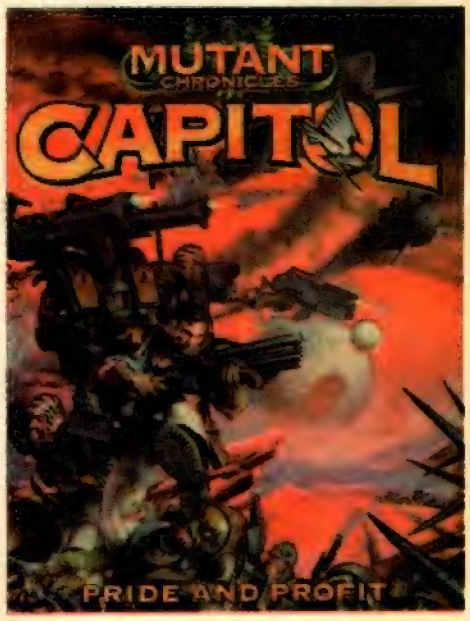
Capitol is among the most versatile of the megacorporations - not mired in age-old traditions as is Imperial, nor tied so tightly to quasi-religious belief systems as the Brotherhood - and as such is able to quickly adapt to the ever changing world.

Pride and Profit is a must for any Mutant Chronicles fan, player, or GM.



Mutant Chronicles: Algeroth, the Apostle of War

Doomtrooper



Mutant Chronicles: Pride and Profit

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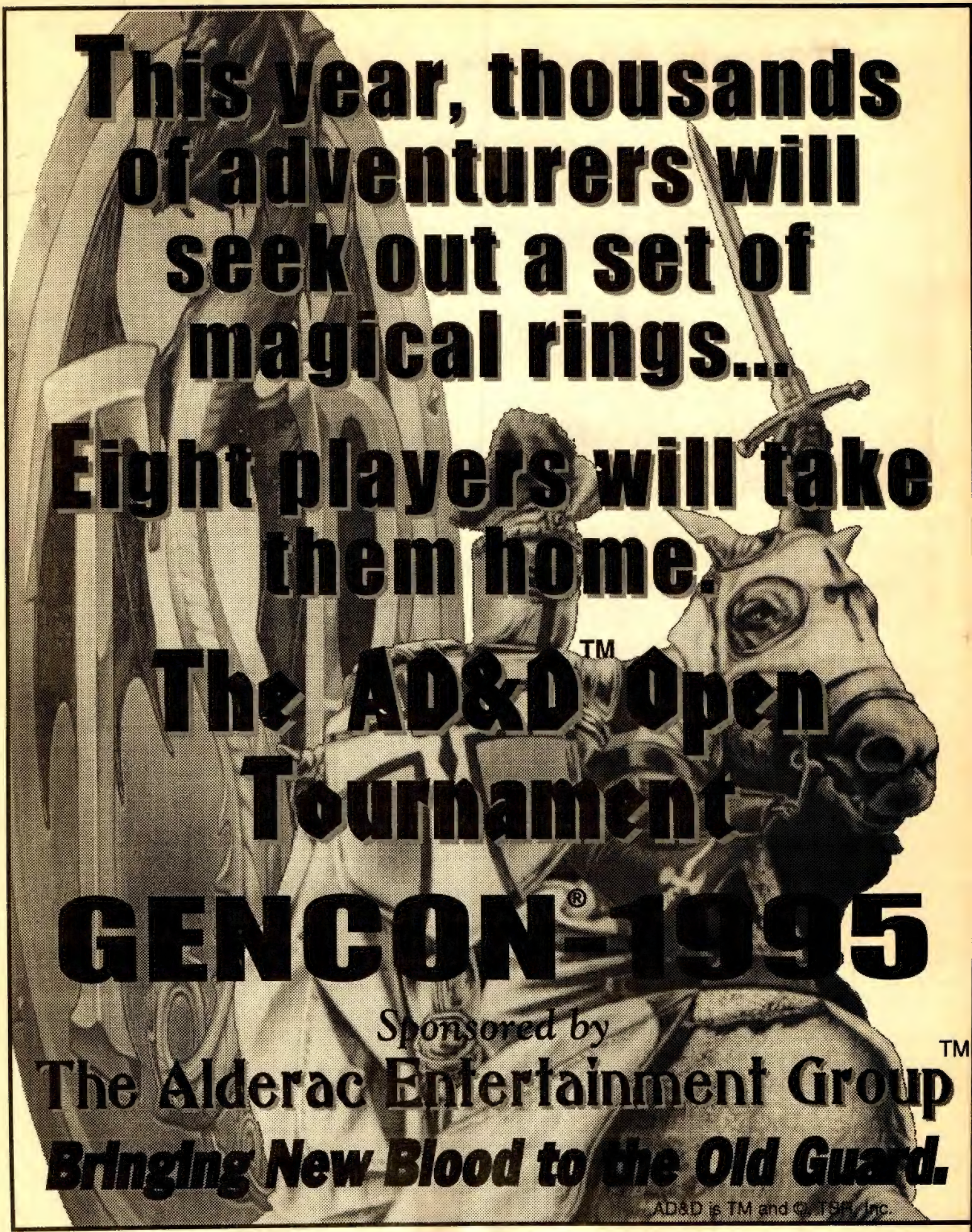
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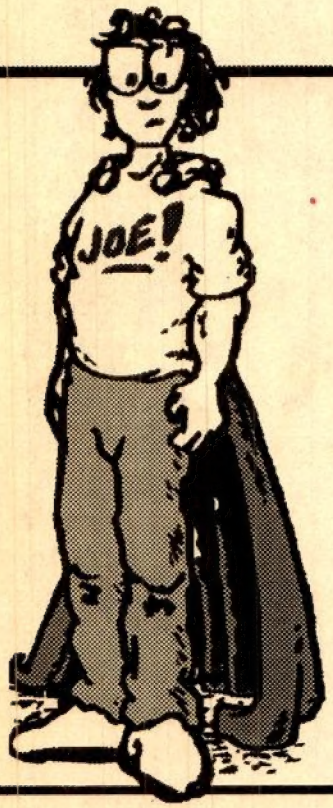
THE ADVENTURES OF JOE GENERO™ THE AVERAGE MAN



This month's rip-roaring rigmarole:

JOE GETS TORN TO PIECES BY SMALL FURRY ANIMALS!

FORGET THE PITBULLS— WHAT ABOUT THE TABBIES?

In *GURPS* (Steve Jackson Games, Inc.), a housecat can kill an average person in about 14 seconds—deadlier than your average Joe with Martial Arts. In *Champions* (Hero System), it takes longer: about 32 seconds, but Joe only has a 4% of connecting with any of his counterattacks.

IT'S NOT THE PIRANHA I'M WORRIED ABOUT...

In *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* (TSR), a band of four ordinary squirrels attacking from surprise will knock Joe senseless the first round, and they can kill him two rounds later. (One could say that squirrels can strip a man of all flesh in 90 seconds...)

"...WITH NASTY, POINTY TEETH!"

For some reason, in *Rolemaster* (Iron Crown Enterprises), bunny rabbits are some of the nastiest creatures you can run into. Due to its special critical hit table, even an ordinary rabbit has about a 4% chance of killing an unarmed human *in a single blow.* In fact, on a million-to-one shot, a bunny can kill a mounted knight in half-plate; Joe has no chance at all.

WHO IS JOE?

Joe Genero is the "Average Man". His attributes are average. His skills are average. His rolls are average.*

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Joe's rolls are calculated with either matrices or DeMoivre's Central Limit Theorem for 95% certainty of results. Where possible, discrete values of time and distance have been converted to constant units. (I.E., we got decimals.)

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Joe is turned on and plugged in...
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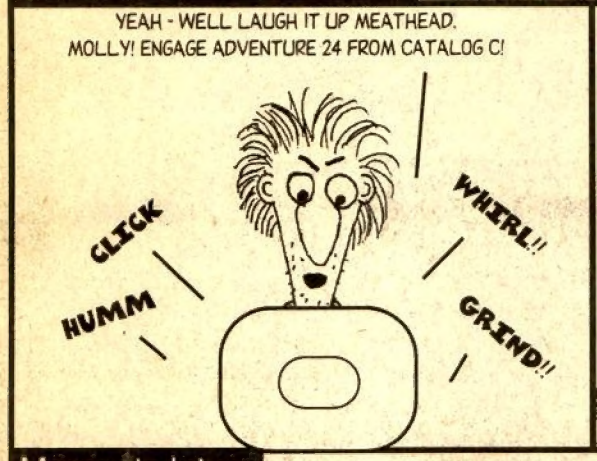
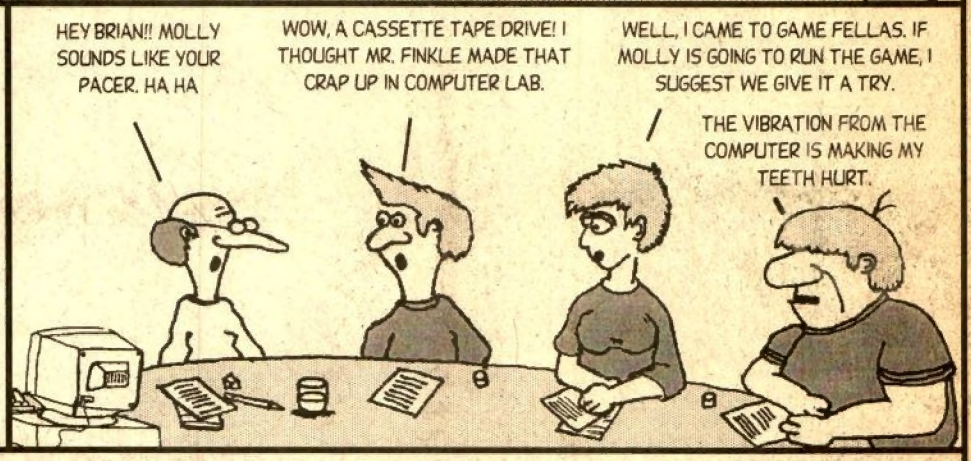
Knights of the Dinner Table™

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN © 1994

B.A. PROUDLY UNVEILS HIS LATEST GM'S AID - MOLLY 5000 - TO A STUNNED GATHERING OF GAMERS. WELL, ALMOST STUNNED.





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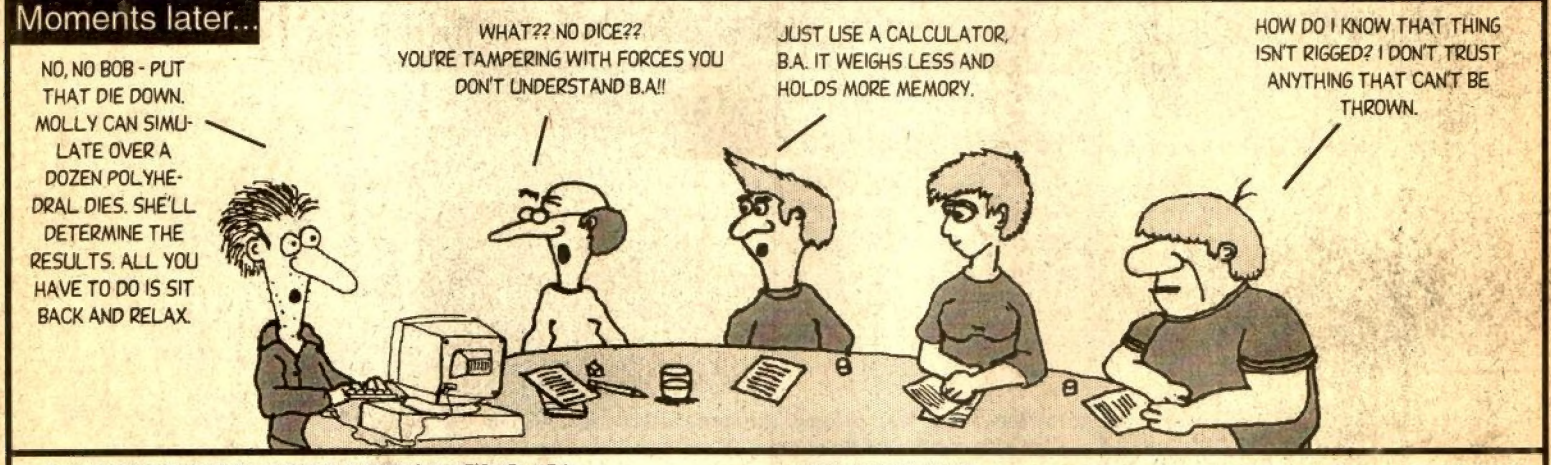

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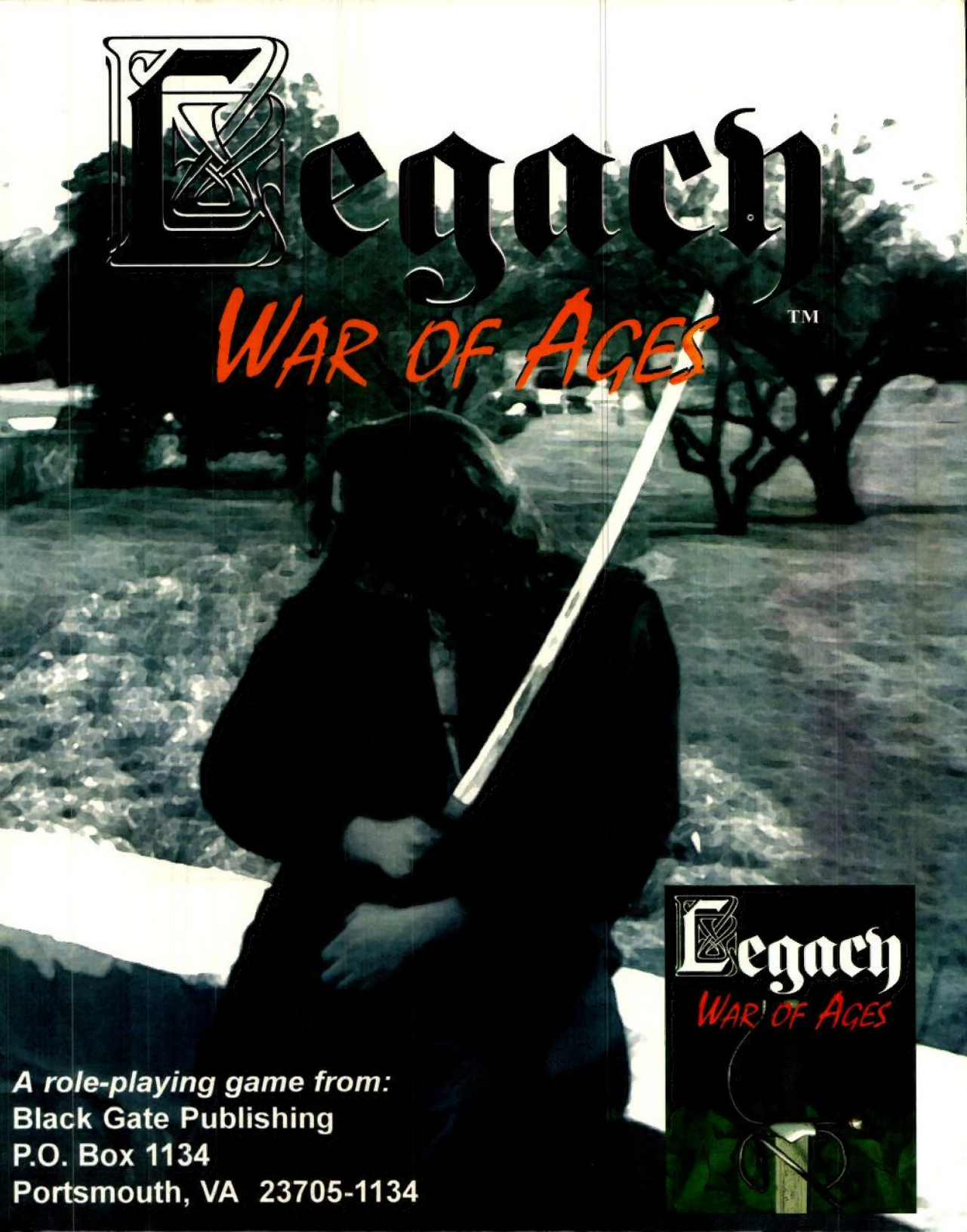

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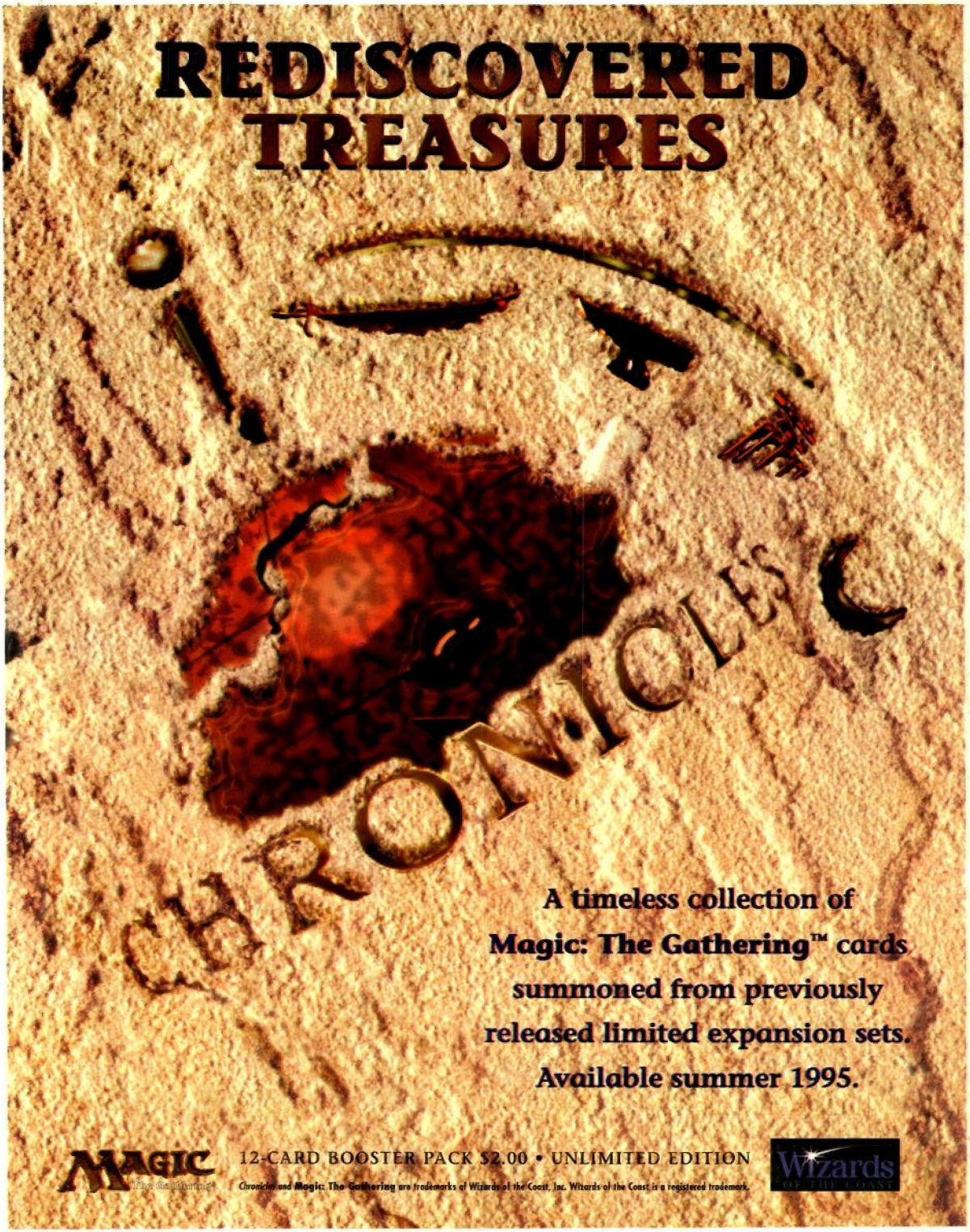
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